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ABSTRACT

Decentralization is arguably one of the most important phenomena to come on to the educational planning agenda in the last 15 years. Why a country should decentralize its educational decision-making process and which decisions should be decentralized are two questions that many decision-makers raise. This booklet is intended to provide educational planners and decision-makers with conceptual tools for dealing with decentralization issues. It explores the central ideas and objectives of decentralization policies and analyzes why many countries are moving toward these policies in some form. The book discusses who should control education, based on considerations of professional expertise, political legitimacy, and market efficiency. The book also provides valuable aids for assessing different contexts and the possibilities that they offer for successful decentralization. (Contains 27 references.) (DFR)

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Fundamentals of Educational Planning

Decentralization of education: why, when, what and how?

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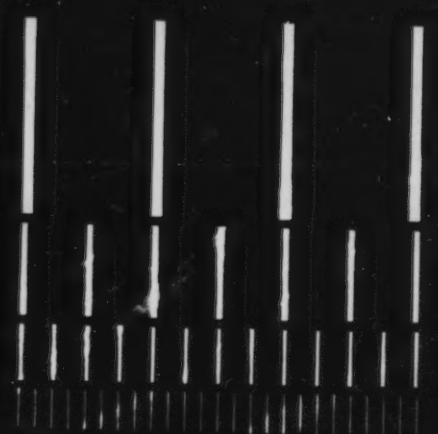

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Decentralization of education: why, when, what and how?

Thomas Welsh and Noel F. McGinn

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UNESCO: International Institute for Educational Planning

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Fundamentals of educational planning

The booklets in this series are written primarily for two types of clientele: those engaged in educational planning and administration, in developing as well as developed countries; and others, less specialized, such as senior government officials and policy-makers who seek a more general understanding of educational planning and of how it is related to overall national development. They are intended to be of use either for private study or in formal training programmes.

Since this series was launched in 1967 practices and concepts of educational planning have undergone substantial change. Many of the assumptions which underlay earlier attempts to rationalize the process of educational development have been criticized or abandoned. Even if rigid mandatory centralized planning has now clearly proven to be inappropriate, this does not mean that all forms of planning have been dispensed with. On the contrary, the need for collecting data, evaluating the efficiency of existing programmes, undertaking a wide range of studies, exploring the future and fostering broad debate on these bases to guide educational policy and decision-making has become even more acute than before.

The scope of educational planning has been broadened. In addition to the formal system of education, it is now applied to all other important educational efforts in non-formal settings. Attention to the growth and expansion of education systems is being complemented and sometimes even replaced by a growing concern for the quality of the entire educational process and for the control of its results. Finally, planners and administrators have become more and more aware of the importance of implementation strategies and of the role of different regulatory mechanisms in this respect: the choice of financing methods, the examination and certification procedures or various other regulation and incentive structures. The concern of planners is twofold: to reach

a better understanding of the validity of education in its own empirically observed specific dimensions and to help in defining appropriate strategies for change.

The purpose of these booklets includes monitoring the evolution and change in educational policies and their effect upon educational planning requirements; highlighting current issues of educational planning and analyzing them in the context of their historical and societal setting; and disseminating methodologies of planning which can be applied in the context of both the developed and the developing countries.

In order to help the Institute identify the real up-to-date issues in educational planning and policy-making in different parts of the world, an Editorial Board has been appointed, composed of two general editors and associate editors from different regions, all professionals of high repute in their own field. At the first meeting of this new Editorial Board in January 1990, its members identified key topics to be covered in the coming issues under the following headings:

1. Education and development.
2. Equity considerations.
3. Quality of education.
4. Structure, administration and management of education.
5. Curriculum.
6. Cost and financing of education.
7. Planning techniques and approaches.
8. Information systems, monitoring and evaluation.

Each heading is covered by one or two associate editors.

The series has been carefully planned but no attempt has been made to avoid differences or even contradictions in the views expressed by the authors. The Institute itself does not wish to impose any official doctrine. Thus, while the views are the responsibility of the authors and may not always be shared by UNESCO or the IIEP, they warrant attention in the international forum of ideas. Indeed, one of the purposes of this series is to reflect a diversity of experience and opinions by

giving different authors from a wide range of backgrounds and disciplines the opportunity of expressing their views on changing theories and practices in educational planning.

Decentralization is arguably one of the most important phenomena to come on to the educational planning agenda in the last 15 years. Why should a country decentralize its educational decision-making process and which decisions should be decentralized are two questions that many decision-makers raise. This booklet is intended to provide educational planners and decision-makers with conceptual tools for dealing with decentralization issues.

The booklet explores the central ideas and objectives of decentralization policies and analyzes why many countries are moving towards these policies in some form. The work discusses who should control education, based on considerations of professional expertise, political legitimacy, and market efficiency. The work also provides valuable aids for assessing different contexts and the possibilities that they offer for successful decentralization.

Thomas Welsh, formerly of the Harvard Institute for International Development, and Noel McGinn, Professor Emeritus of the Harvard University Graduate School of Education, contribute invaluably in this booklet to the existing knowledge on this topic. They thoroughly analyze the concepts and reasoning underpinning the different approaches to the debate. The IIEP is very grateful to them both for their invaluable input into the educational planning field and the decentralization debate.

Jacques Hallak
Assistant Director-General, UNESCO
Director, IIEP

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Preface

Decentralization is one of the most important phenomena to have affected educational planning in the last 15 years. Who should make decisions regarding public schooling? Who should pay for it? Such questions have become the objects of passionate debates. In the present context of pressure to reduce public spending and increase efficiency in the use of resources, decentralization has become a reality in many countries, even in those that are considered highly centralized.

Reasons for decentralization are numerous. In some cases it is a question of increasing efficiency in management and governance. Where the state bureaucracy appears heavy and slow, where it has proven unable to tackle issues of teacher deployment, teacher payment, purchase and distribution of equipment and material or maintenance of buildings, decentralization appears to be the solution: it can allow a faster identification of problems and the search for more appropriate responses. In many cases, decentralization is also the result of the process of political democratization: people want to be consulted and involved in decision-making that concerns them directly. Decentralization also helps in clarifying lines of accountability. Several other reasons are behind such administrative reform moves, including the desire of certain governments to reduce the power of teachers' unions. But in several developing countries the prime motor of decentralization may have been the search for new resources. Central governments devolve the management of the schools that they can no longer finance. Decentralization allows for the mobilization of resources at the local level, through special taxes or community participation that would not be available otherwise. Even if the state largely continues to finance education through the provision of funds to regional authorities, it is assumed that scarce public funds will be used more carefully.

This resource mobilization argument is also the cause of much concern over decentralization. Provinces and communities have very

unequal human and financial resources. If the state does not compensate such inequalities by providing the necessary resources and technical assistance, then decentralization can lead to serious disparities.

The debate, marked by ideological and philosophical considerations, has been going on for several years. One should recognize however that no country is completely centralized or completely decentralized. The issue to be discussed is in fact which decisions should be decentralized, to whom should schools be accountable, and what will be the regulatory role of the state. There are a variety of ways of decentralizing and the problem is complex. Strictly speaking, decentralization in education means the devolution of authority from a higher to a lower level of authority. But this lower level can be another administrative level within the Ministry of Education, such as a provincial department or a school: this process is usually called deconcentration. It can be an elected body at regional or community level: one speaks then of devolution. Decentralization may also mean transfer of authority to a private firm or individual, in which case it is more a case of privatization. The results are not the same.

A previous issue in this series analyzed in detail the case of school-based management, which is a process of decentralization to a professional body, the school. While analyzing the different ways of decentralizing, the authors of the present issue, Thomas Welsh and Noel McGinn, admit, in contrast, a preference in favour of decentralization to community representatives, what they call the political legitimacy approach. They also look at what decisions have been relocated in different contexts.

Another set of questions that interests decision-makers is what are the conditions to be fulfilled to successfully implement a decentralization reform? Which political context is more suitable for what type of decentralization and what are the measures to be taken that can contribute to its success?

In this booklet, Thomas Welsh and Noel McGinn analyze a great deal of the literature on the topic, and thus make a very important contribution to the series. But their work is more than a state-of-the-art: it adds enormously to the stock of knowledge surrounding the decentralization debate.

The aim of the Institute is to foster debate by providing a forum for work espousing a range of different viewpoints. This is done because, in addition to the manifold benefits of open discussion, decision-making processes involve the weighing of many different factors and types of information. It is hoped that the provision of these booklets coming from distinct perspectives will provide educational planners with elements to suit their diverse needs.

Françoise Caillods
Co-General Editor

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Introduction: what this monograph is about

This monograph summarizes what the authors have learned, through the experiences of others, about the decentralization of authority for decision-making in public education systems. The conclusions are based on the results of a wide variety of experiments carried out in a number of countries. It is now possible to specify the conditions that must be met for a decentralization reform to achieve the objectives set for it. There are a variety of forms of decentralization, and different strategies to implement each. In most circumstances, an effective decentralization will shift the location of only some decisions. In some situations, decentralization may not be recommended at all, let alone be feasible. The monograph addresses each of these points.

The objective of the monograph is to describe a generic strategy for decentralization of governance in an education system. *Chapter I* deals with some conceptual definitions of decentralization. In *Chapters II through V*, the major questions about decentralization policies are discussed. These are:

Chapter II. Why should decentralization be considered at all?

This question is about the objectives that are sought, and achieved or not, in various decentralization reforms. As will be seen, this question is not only about specific decisions and outcomes, but also about who should make and benefit from those decisions. *Chapter II* reviews a number of different kinds of decentralization reforms.

Chapter III. Which particular decisions should be relocated?

Education is a complex endeavour involving several kinds of decisions. *Chapter III* defines those decisions, and reasons and conditions for the location of authority to make them. It first describes how countries vary in the pattern of location of decisions, and then categorizes the specific decisions most critical to the education process.

Chapter IV. When is it most appropriate to begin a decentralization reform?

This question is about the conditions that must be present for the successful implementation of a reform, and for realization of the objectives of that shift. *Chapter IV* provides a scheme for identifying the most important social actors and the positions they are likely to take with respect to decentralization, and the capacities and capabilities that the system must have in order for decentralization to achieve the objectives sought for it.

Organizational change seldom follows a straight-line path; similarly the discussion in this monograph must occasionally deviate from the rational sequence of the three questions listed above. Some case studies are provided as illustration of particular tactics or aspects of a strategy. While success (or failure) in one setting, however, does not justify (nor recommend against) transfer to another, the description of the process may be helpful in understanding how to construct one's own strategy.

Emphasis is on the concept of 'strategy' as a process of adapting and changing policies to meet changing circumstances, including improved information and understanding. There is no simple recipe for the effective decentralization of education. The possible outcomes are several, and sometimes contradictory. Systems are not monolithic; it is possible to simultaneously decentralize some elements and centralize others. Some policies transfer all authority to other organizations, while others include sharing of authority. The processes to accomplish this transfer are complex and vary across national contexts.

The monograph concludes in *Chapter V* with recommendations for general principles to be followed with respect to decentralization. By definition these principles are personal and cannot be justified by reference to empirical fact.

I. Basic concepts and definitions

All organizations, public and private, are 'governed', that is, conform to decisions about purpose, structure, personnel, clients and resources. The term 'organizations' includes groups as disparate as state governments, ministries of education, school councils, parent/teacher associations, and municipalities. Organizations are defined as actors in the corporate sense, although in many cases it is individual persons within the organization who are the actors. For example, in an autocratic organization one or a small number of persons makes decisions. Where it is considered essential, a distinction is made between autocratic and democratic organizations. Otherwise, the term organization is used to refer to the broad range of groups that might receive authority for making decisions about education.

The decisions in question are those meant to affect the behaviour of members of the organization. Authority to make decisions is assigned by constitutions, legislation, decrees and regulations to occupants of positions (for example, a district superintendent) or to governing bodies (for example, a district council). These can be called 'framework' decisions, as they constrain and shape decisions and behaviours of the organization's members (OECD, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, 1995). Not included in the discussion are all the other decisions made every day by teachers, principals, supervisors, ministry officials and others going about their work.

Decentralization is about shifts in the location of those who govern, about transfers of authority from those in one location or level vis-à-vis education organizations, to those in another level. The location of authority is expressed in terms of the location of the position or the governing body (for example, the district level). **Four possible locations of authority are considered in this monograph: the central government; provincial, state or regional governing bodies; municipal, county or district governments; and schools.**

The complexities of decentralization

Decentralization is often defined in terms of four degrees of transfer of authority: deconcentration, delegation, devolution, and privatization (Rondinelli et al., 1984). Although there is considerable variation in actual practices, these terms are a good starting point for our discussion. As anticipated earlier, deconcentration reforms spread central authority without transferring it to other bodies. For example, if a national government establishes offices for test administration in provincial capitals, it reduces the concentration of authority in the national capital. **Deconcentration** reforms shift authority for implementation of rules, but not for making them.

Some countries have **delegated** authority for public education to representatives of the Minister, located in each of the state or provincial capitals. This was the first step in the decentralization reform of Mexico, beginning in 1979. Delegates appointed by the national Minister were given authority over essential aspects of education in each of the various states. The delegates consulted with state government officials such as the Governor, but were responsible to the Minister.

The term **devolution** implies that something is given back to an organization from which it had been taken. The term is often used by those calling for transfer of authority to more local units of government, for example, provinces or municipalities.

The variety of labels and strategies explains why evaluations of 'decentralization' policies yield such conflicting results. Stakeholders may try out the same policies in several countries, but vary in their objectives, capacity for faithful implementation, and adulterations. There is no one size that fits all nor one strategy that is a best bet in all contexts.

Most decentralization reforms have failed to achieve the objectives set for them, it is believed, because reformers assume that others have the same understanding of decentralization and share similar

objectives. To avoid a similar mistake, some of the various ways of thinking about decentralization are reviewed first.

Images of decentralization

The term 'decentralization' implies dispersal of something aggregated or concentrated around a single point. A common metaphor used to describe this dispersal is that of the pyramid. Most public and private organizations rely on 'leaders', or specially designated persons, to make decisions for the rest of the members of the organization. In both the public and the private sector, large organizations tend to be hierarchical in structure, that is, to have multiple layers of authority. Decisions made at the 'top' layer affect more people, and those made at the bottom affect fewer people. The conventional table of organization conveys this image. A single position, that of Minister, is at the top. The Minister is connected downward with two or more Directors-General, each of whom is connected downward with two or more Directors, each of whom supervises two or more Education Officers. Decentralization moves authority downward from the point of the pyramid towards the base.

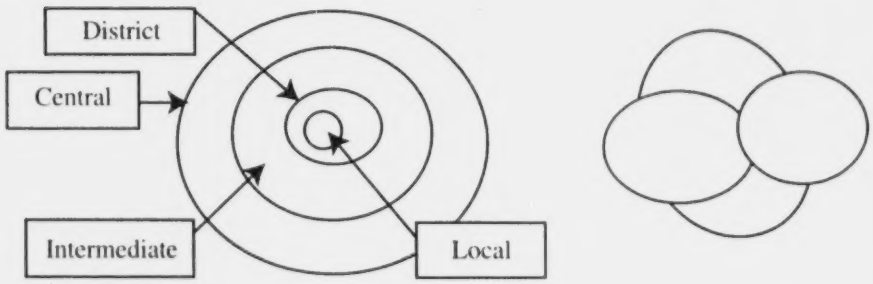
An alternative image of this form of organization is that of an octopus, which has a large central body and arms or tentacles. The tentacles are essential to the life of the octopus; they enable it to gather in food, to move away from danger, and to fight its predators. Work is done by the system's tentacles, for example by teachers in classrooms, but it is the central body that makes all decisions.

Figure 1 offers a different image of decentralization. The boundary of each circle defines its autonomy, but its full identity is shared with other circles. These may be nested, that is organized in a concentric fashion (Graphic A), or overlapping (Graphic B). These figures suggest different ways of thinking about the issue of centralization/decentralization.

In each metaphor, there is a common theme. Decentralization involves dispersal, increased 'space' between constituent parts, and perhaps a weakened set of relationships. Dispersal, and space, permit

the development of individuality, or diversity. Decentralization in itself makes systems less homogeneous, its component parts less uniform. This increases difficulties of communication and integration. The last four sections of the monograph suggest how to resolve these issues.

Figure 1. Two images of decentralization



Public and private organizations vary among themselves in the extent to which authority is held at the centre or at the highest level in the hierarchy. Some large corporations make all decisions at the home office; others give authority to branch managers. For example, Catholic priests are responsible to their bishops who in turn are responsible to the Pope. Baptist ministers, on the other hand, are hired and fired by individual congregations. Catholics are more alike in their practices and beliefs than are Baptists. The Catholic Church is therefore more highly centralized than the American Baptist Church.

Countries also vary considerably in the degree to which authority is concentrated in one office. In some countries, all critical decisions about education are made by the national ministry; in others, states and districts make most decisions. At least on paper, the schools in centralized countries are more alike in what they teach than are schools in countries where authority is more dispersed.

This complexity is a result of the actions of different groups of social actors attempting to control education to serve their unique objectives. Decentralization changes the relationships between these groups, and it can change education.

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II. Why decentralize?

Most proposals for 'decentralization' seek to change or redistribute the outcomes or benefits produced by education. These are many and quite different in nature. 'Education', understood as the operation of an education system, does more than just teach children to read and write, to behave as moral persons and good citizens, and to contribute actively to the economy. The transformation of youth certainly is for most people the main purpose of education, but the operation of the system also has other effects that are valued. The formal curriculum and the content of schooling contribute to public definition of what an 'educated' person should know, and what language s/he should speak. Attainments in schooling are an important indicator in the assignment of social ranks, and contribute to the maintenance of class and cultural distinctions within a society as well as between societies. The education system is usually the largest 'industry' in a nation, generating employment and spending a significant portion of the annual government budget. Employment and expenditures (for example, on building schools) are an important source of political patronage.

These objectives for education have been around for some time, and were present when the process of centralization of education began. The 'centralization' of education was in most cases a conscious effort to provide more education to more people, and to improve the quality of what was offered. An examination of the logic and consequences of the earlier construction of centralized control of education will help in understanding today's enthusiasm for de-centralization, and how most of that enthusiasm is realistic.

Why education was centralized

The earliest offerings of education followed an apprenticeship or learning-by-doing model and were controlled by individual teachers. Over time communities took control of education, each community

pursuing its own objectives. Initially instruction was provided by members of a teacher caste or by persons chosen by religious or civil organizations for their beliefs or level of education. These persons were not trained teachers as we have today. Even so, these systems were effective in teaching basic skills. For example, in the city-states of what is now Italy, a high proportion of the population achieved literacy. On the other hand, teachers seldom generated a shared set of values and facts, even within the same city.

The expansion of education throughout the world in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries occurred simultaneously with the development of strong governments, which sought standardization of the content and processes of schooling. There were, it is true, differences in the location of the governance of education. In a small handful of countries, initial governance was by small communities or municipalities. In others, governance was at the state, provincial, or national level. In most countries, governments actually ran schools, while in a few countries they monitored schools run by non-governmental groups or private individuals. In all cases, however, governments assumed an authority over education that previously had been exercised by disparate groups outside the government. In other words, control of education ended up more centralized than before.

The impact of urbanization

Centralization of governance of education went hand in hand with population growth and urbanization. Growth of cities made feasible the construction of large schools that could offer a full range of courses. Large markets and improved printing technologies lowered the cost of books that could carry the common curriculum. Technological advances in manufacturing and other sectors required knowledge and skills taught in schools and reduced youth employment opportunities. Nationalism and economic competition between nation-states heightened the importance of educating loyal citizens. All these developments gave reason to the centralization of control of education.

Furthermore, the burden of finance of the expansion of education was assigned to, or taken up by, governments. In some cases governments (national, state, local) used taxes to fund government-

run schools. In other cases (and sometimes in the same country), tax revenues were used to purchase education services from private (but government regulated) providers. In a few countries governments created a strong demand for education (for example, by making a diploma a requirement for government employment) and citizens 'voluntarily' financed government and non-government schools. Countries in which governments did not spend more on education lagged behind in expansion of enrolments.

Education improved in quality as a direct result of the ability to standardize the content and provision of education. Standardization came about through government specification of what objectives were to be pursued in schools, what could be taught, who could be taught, who could teach, where teaching would take place, and how schools would be financed. In most countries, governments relied on 'inspectors' or 'supervisors' to ensure the implementation of central regulations. Countries not able to carry out effective supervision had lower levels of enrolments and of educational quality. Centralization of authority reduced instances of corruption at the local level.

In some instances, the new 'common', 'public', or 'fiscal' schools displaced a small number of privately run institutions often of higher quality. Public provision and government-controlled finance did, however, make an education of reasonable quality available to more children. In those countries in which governments invested heavily in public education, quality improved and approached that offered previously only by private institutions and available only to a small segment of the population.

The impact of scientific reasoning

The regulations that created public systems of education were in most cases justified in the name of science. In some cases, experimental research identified best contents and practices, in other cases 'scientific reasoning' was the source of the regulations. The science dominant in the founding of national education systems sought certain knowledge and universal laws. Science promised the discovery

of those common principles which, when applied faithfully, would yield the same positive results in all circumstances.

Science not only vastly expanded the body of knowledge to be taught, it also expanded knowledge about how people learn, and about how to organize schools in order to enhance learning. Researchers compared schools within and across countries in the pursuit of how to obtain the most effective education. The methods applied were derived in large measure from research on other kinds of organizations. By the second decade of the twentieth century, education was submitted to the same principles of 'scientific management' that were being applied in large corporations. The principles of standardization that made possible the achievements of the Industrial Revolution were applied to education. Science legitimated the 'best practices' all schools should follow.

Standardization and bureaucratization provided the management structure of education organizations

The achievement of standardization was thought to be most likely in a system in which there is only one decision-making body, that is, in a centralized system of governance. In the pursuit of improved quality and higher efficiency through standardization, most education systems became more centralized. More decisions over more domains of education were made by fewer decision-making bodies. For example, the number of autonomous school districts in the United States of America was reduced from over 200,000 before 1850, to about 30,000 by 1930. In Latin America, national governments, eager to expand education, took responsibility away from municipalities.

The organization and operation of education was in many countries entrusted to a single government body, often a ministry of education. This ministry, like other government agencies, and like the most modern corporations, was organized as a 'bureaucracy'. The term, today used as a pejorative to refer to all that is wrong with our governments, was developed originally to explain the impressive achievements of the modern industrial corporations. Those achievements were attributed to the following elements:

- Assembling of materials and workers at a single site to facilitate control and integration.
- Division of labour in the organization into 'positions', each of which required a relatively limited number of tasks or activities. This reduced reliance on highly skilled artisans.
- Specification, in writing and in objective terms, of the tasks to be performed by occupants of the positions. Each position could be described in terms that facilitated recruitment of persons with requisite capacities.
- Training of new occupants to a relatively high level of competence in the execution of the tasks. Training was facilitated by the concrete specification of the tasks to be carried out.
- Supervision and retraining of occupants to ensure maintenance of a relatively high level of performance of tasks. Specification of standards facilitated the task of supervision.
- Monitoring of the final quality of products, and correction of the division of labour and specification of tasks as necessary to maintain a high level of quality.

In education this meant the:

- construction of special sites where learning would take place;
- division of learning objectives into grades associated with chronological age;
- specification of specific content to be learned and procedures for teaching that content for each grade;
- formal training of teachers in content and methods;
- supervision of teacher and student performance; and
- examinations at the end of the cycle of grades to determine levels of learning.

The assembly line that generated relatively high-quality goods at relatively low cost also made it possible to educate large numbers of children.

In education as in industry, deviations from adherence to the basic principles of bureaucratic organization result in lower efficiency and reduced quality of product. When children do not have proper schools and materials, when teachers are not well trained and

supervision is inadequate to correct deficiencies in training, performance suffers. Imposition of standards means fewer children complete the cycle (many fail to learn to read, fail and eventually abandon school). If standards are not imposed, the knowledge level of graduates suffers. In a situation of scarce resources, low efficiency means that not all children can be provided an acceptable level of quality education.

The point of this familiar history is to remind us that what we have achieved today is a large measure of standardization, made possible through centralization of the governance of education. If what we have achieved came through standardization, what explains the rise of the worldwide movement for decentralization?

Reasons for the appearance of decentralization

There are three major factors that account for the upsurge of interest in decentralization beginning around 1970.

First, the political-economic debates of the 1970s and 1980s resulted in the disintegration of the western 'Keynesian consensus' that had favoured strong, centralized governments. A similar repositioning happened in Russia and Eastern Europe. The outcome was a reformulation and reduction of the role of central government and an increasing role for the market.

Economic and financial globalization has further weakened central government. On the one hand, supranational organizations have reduced national sovereignty. On the other hand, a shift towards market-based decision-making has strengthened local groups. This makes it more difficult for governments to capture funds for social programmes. Decentralization advocates included roles for privatization and the encouragement of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In essence a new political-economic paradigm emerged.

At the same time, education systems around the world had doubled and tripled enrolments. The increases in teachers and students strained the capacity of centralized bureaucracies to maintain quality. Increasing

public dissatisfaction has resulted in pressures to shift decision-making to local groups.

Finally, the emergence of new information and communication technologies has made it possible to achieve high levels of control over systems, with decentralized management. A new paradigm of management emphasizing attention to outputs rather than inputs gave increased importance to strengthening local capacity for decision-making.

These and other reasons for the rise of the decentralization movement are expressed in the following list of objectives.

A list of objectives for decentralization

The following list of 'objectives' for decentralization is based on an examination of a number of reforms. Decentralization has been proposed in order to:

- Improve education per se directly, for example, by:
  - increasing the amount of inputs to schooling;
  - improving the quality of inputs to schooling;
  - increasing the relevance of programmes, or matching programme content to local interests;
  - increasing the innovativeness of programmes;
  - increasing the range of options available to students;
  - reducing inequalities in access to education of quality;
  - increasing learning outcomes.
- Improve the operation of the education system, for example, by:
  - increasing the efficiency in allocation of resources;
  - increasing efficiency in the utilization of resources;
  - increasing the match of programmes to employers' requirements;
  - increasing the use of information about issues, problems or innovations (thereby improving efficiency).

- Change the sources and amount of funds available for education, for example by:

  - increasing the overall amount of money spent on education;
  - shifting the sources of funding from one social group to another (other than within levels of government).

- Benefit the central government primarily, by:

  - relieving the central government of external political problems;
  - relieving the central government of internal bureaucratic headaches;
  - relieving the central government of financial burden (this includes policies to shift revenue generation to local government);
  - increasing the political legitimacy of central government;
  - reducing corruption at the national level.

- Benefit local government primarily, by:

  - increasing revenues for education available to local government;
  - increasing the capacity of local governments;
  - improving the responsiveness of central government to local government requirements;
  - redistributing political power, weakening actors at the centre in favour of those outside the centre.

These objectives could be categorized in other ways. A frequently used scheme distinguishes between:

(a) political motives - in most of the world there is a groundswell of enthusiasm for increased participation in public decision-making by groups that have or claim to have been excluded earlier; and
(b) level of funding motives - central governments do not or can not provide the finance to meet demand for schooling;
(c) efficiency motives - prompted by an argument that more local decision-making will reduce the cost of producing a unit of output.

It is also possible that a proposed decentralization reform in education is intended to distract attention from the pursuit of other objectives, that is, that no direct change is expected as a result of changes in governance of education.

Most decentralization reforms pursue some combination of these objectives. This complexity increases the importance of thinking through the strategy to be pursued, as the same tactics do not work equally well for all objectives. The various ways to increase efficiency, for example, do not completely overlap with the various ways to increase the capacity of local government. The central ministry may be willing to sacrifice some efficiency in the short term, if it thinks that eventually a more capable local government will be more efficient. A reform that seeks to maximize two otherwise competing objectives will require special efforts to overcome the normal difficulties this entails.

Proposals for decentralization usually threaten those persons and groups who benefit from the current governance system. The threat may be real, or only perceived, but if the proposal mobilizes heavy opposition to change, the likelihood of success is reduced. It may be possible to construct a strategy that achieves the ministry's goal without threatening others. Attention to others' motives can result in a fruitful exchange of information that can lead to previously unidentified strategies.

Who should control education?

Complaints about excessive centralization of decision-making in education contain a criticism of those currently making decisions. Decentralization is about shifting power from some decision-makers to others. All proposals for decentralization can be categorized into one or more of three major positions with respect to who is best qualified to make decisions. The three justifications can be labelled:

1. political legitimacy;
2. professional expertise; and
3. market efficiency.

The fundamental difference between the positions is with respect to the justification for holding authority. These justifications are ideological, in that they are rooted in values and beliefs not justified by reference to facts. Given their ideological charge the positions are seldom articulated in public debates about decentralization. Discussion instead is about isolated technical decisions. Sometimes, as a consequence, reforms contain contradictory elements and produce results contrary to the interests of their proponents. Reforms that correspond to each of the three justifications vary in both degree and kind of effectiveness.

The discussion that follows defines each position with respect to the group of social actors that is given authority for education; compares this position with the other two; discusses the level of the system at which authority can be located; reviews requirements for management; and discusses the impact on community participation in decision-making.

1. Political legitimacy

This position legitimates governance of education by persons who have been selected through a political process that permits groups in society to express their preferences. The process of selection is often conflictive. Those selected need not be 'expert' in education or governance. Authority is inherent in the position, and not in special attributes of the occupant of the position. Actions are right or correct because the authority takes them, not because they agree with expert knowledge.

Proposals for decentralization stimulated by a concern for Political Legitimacy are generally linked with calls for democracy, as when schools or education systems are governed directly by communities (local, regional, national) or by their elected representatives. This is how American education began and is the objective of recent reforms in Australia and New Zealand. In these systems, community members have the final authority for decisions about all aspects of education, including curriculum (but excepting instructional practices). Professional teachers are hired and fired by politically selected community members. Other countries, for example Colombia, El

Salvador, and the United Kingdom, have limited versions of community control, for example reserving control over curriculum to professionals.

Political legitimacy and professional expertise

The important distinction between the Political Legitimacy and Professional Expertise basis for decentralization is not whether the government is democratic or not, but **whether governance is legitimated by expertise or by political right**. Some otherwise highly democratic countries with high levels of local participation in politics (e.g. the Scandinavian countries) entrust the control of schools to professional educators who enjoy considerable autonomy (OECD, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, 1995). In other countries (e.g. some states and cities of the USA) reforms have sought to reduce control by professional educators by giving authority to local communities (Lewis and Nakagawa, 1995).

Not all forms of decentralization result in greater political democracy. Shifting the locus of control from central ministries to districts or even to schools can increase the participation of principals or teachers in decision-making without increasing the participation of citizens. For example, in the United Kingdom the 'Thatcher' reform shifted control away from elected local education authorities to schools in which headmasters and headmistresses tended to dominate (Whitty and Seddon, 1994).

Proposals to shift from professional to political control of education signal a loss of public confidence in professional expertise. Inasmuch as few countries have prior experience with non-professional governance of education, the move is away from what has failed rather than towards what has been proven effective.

Level to which authority is transferred

In Latin America, Political Legitimacy reforms have transferred managerial responsibility to state and to municipal governments. State governments have been given control of primary and secondary education in Argentina and Mexico. Brazil and Colombia share control of education between elected officials in state governments and elected

officials in municipal governments. In Colombia, teachers are hired and paid by the state, municipal governments have control over all other aspects of the operation of schools. The elected mayors and councils they appoint exercise control. In Ghana, elected district assemblies supervise the decisions of directors of education at the district level. Australia and Israel have created elected councils at the district level.

Impact on management

A number of Political Legitimacy reforms have built governance units at the school level. In the city of Chicago (450,000 students), parents and residents have authority over professional staff in the local school. A *council* governs every school with 10 members elected by their peers: six parents, two teachers and two community members; and the principal. The council can hire and fire principals and teachers, and chooses curriculum, disciplines students and fixes schedules. Schools receive a budget allocation based on enrolments and have total autonomy for how the allocation is spent.

In New Zealand, each school is managed by its own *elected board* of trustees in which community members predominate. These boards hire and fire staff, but salaries are set nationally. The boards choose or develop curriculum (within national objectives), set language of instruction, choose or develop instructional materials including texts, and manage block grants of funds from the national government. The ministry using national achievement tests, assesses school performance. The national ministry charters all schools. Boards of trustees have complete autonomy in how they run their schools, but the ministry reserves the right to intervene if performance does not meet standards specified in the charter (Perris, 1998).

Beginning in 1991, Nicaragua has established *governance councils* in all public schools. Members include the principal, teachers, parents and students. The number of members varies with the size of the school. A school of less than 500 students has nine members: the school principal; a teacher selected by the Teachers' Council; five parents; and two students (one elected by students, the other chosen by parents). The ministry retains control over curriculum and teacher

certification, but schools have autonomy in hiring and firing both principal and directors, setting schedules, choosing methods of instruction, selecting textbooks, setting voluntary fees, and making and administering the school budget.

Some reforms are mixed models of Professional Expertise and Political Legitimacy. For example, in the American State of Kentucky, elected school councils are composed of three teachers, the principal, and two parents elected from the community. In most cases, teachers prevail in the critical decisions. Where power is shared, however, parents participate in decisions about budget and instructional issues.

Success of school-based management in a Political Legitimacy system depends on the ability of school administrators (at the district and the school level) to maintain the involvement of the community in decision-making. Many communities are heterogeneous. If one community group is able to dominate a school board or council to the exclusion of other groups, the experiment loses its democratic character. Adjudication between competing community groups becomes a primary task of the administrator (Rugh and Bossert, 1998). **The principal's role shifts from Master Teacher or Communication Link with the Centre, to Community Developer.**

Community participation in a politically-controlled system

All these reforms are based on the premise that persons who are not education professionals can govern schools effectively. In practice, all reforms proceed with some caution, gradually extending authority to communities as they acquire and demonstrate capacity to govern. Some are designed as opportunities for communities to learn how to govern. In New Zealand, for example,

> "At any one time 20,000 people (mainly parents) are learning how to set policies to manage property, personnel, finances and curriculum ..." and to "... create real learning environments in early childhood centres, schools and tertiary institutions" (O'Rourke in Perris, 1998).

Participation by community members ranges along a scale from involvement in decisions for which professionals have limited special knowledge, to activities that are the core of the professionals' expertise. Many Political Legitimacy reforms (e.g. that in Colombia) begin with transfer of authority and responsibility for buildings. The next step is often authority to exercise budgets (which typically local professionals have never controlled).

The next step is to transfer authority to make budgets, which is linked with decisions about the number and kind of personnel to hire, and then authority for hiring and firing. In El Salvador, parent associations in schools of the EDUCO programme are allowed to hire teachers (from a list of central government-qualified candidates) and can refuse to renew their contract at the end of the school year. One of the objectives of this policy is to increase teacher attendance (World Bank, 1994).

The final level of community governance is decision-making about curriculum. So far, almost all central governments that pursue Political Legitimacy decentralization have retained control over curriculum content; all specify the learning objectives that local units are to pursue. The expressed concern is that education continues to contribute to national identity and integration. Here practice contradicts rhetoric, however. None of the accountability systems proposed by central governments assesses whether schools produce loyal citizens or contribute to national integration.

Teachers have a different set of concerns from that of the central ministry with respect to Political Legitimacy reforms. At the local level teachers resist community involvement in decisions of hiring and firing. The expressed concern is that teachers will be subject to pressures from individual parents and politicians. In most cases, teachers' unions have fought community control of budgets and salaries. At the ministry level, professionals have resisted non-professional control over curriculum and instructional materials.

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Summary

Political Legitimacy reforms are feasible in 'strong' states, that is, in societies in which sharing power with local communities is not likely to lead to destabilization of the central government. These societies have already achieved a high level of social equity across regions, classes, ethnic and religious groups. Societies that are already well integrated, that have in place systems for political and social dialogue, can tolerate higher levels of diversity. The central government is not threatened when a local community constructs an education different in content and practice than that which professionals would choose. Of more importance (to all levels of government) is that the community remains committed to the use of peaceful means to settle differences with other communities. The long-term ambition is for communities to work together towards an integrated system that respects differences across communities.

2. Professional expertise

This position on governance assigns authority primarily to those with expert technical knowledge about how best to operate the education system. The knowledge that is privileged is about what to do and how to do it, rather than about the end to be pursued. The knowledge is positive and certain; there is a best answer for every question, a best solution for each problem. Expert knowledge is produced through science. A special education or training qualifies a recipient as a professional, as an expert.

Expert authorities are, of course, always ultimately under political control, especially in a democracy. In many countries, however, once experts are appointed to their offices they act with considerable autonomy. That autonomy is most pronounced in countries with a permanent civil service or public administration corps (such as India, France or the USA). Once persons enter the civil service they are almost totally free of political interference. Even in countries without a permanent civil service, however, exercise of authority may be justified principally because of the expert knowledge of the office holder. For example, the recently created provincial ministries of education in Argentina will be staffed by persons selected primarily

for their professional training, and not because they are representatives of some political organization.

The Professional Expertise position is the most common way of thinking about governance. Almost everywhere, education is seen as an activity best left to professionals, persons with special training, skills and knowledge. Those who are not expert may occasionally be consulted, but most often the objective of this consultation is to legitimate the continued governance of the system by professionals. Those who hold this perspective argue that Education should be non-political and that decisions should be based on research and policy analysis. The central task of management is to ensure the implementation of policies and rules determined through application of expert knowledge.

This form of governance is so widespread that it is tempting to assume that it is a natural condition, the only way in which education systems can be operated effectively. Certainly in many countries it is the only form that public education has experienced. Education has come to be synonymous with ministries of education, district education officers, supervisors or inspectors, headmasters and headmistresses, and teachers trained in special institutions. Although there are challenges to the exclusive governance of education by educators, primarily from economists, the argument is about which group is more expert, not about whether professionals should govern.

Level to which authority is transferred

Decentralization reforms from the Professional Expertise position vary in the level of the education system to which authority is transferred. In many countries, the initial stage of reform transfers authority from professionals in the central government to professionals in the state or provincial government. Decentralization in Argentina, for example, has meant the creation of ministries of education in each of the 24 provinces of the nation. Each ministry is given the same functions originally exercised by the national ministry. In effect this is a territorial decentralization; authority is dispersed over a geographic area.

In some countries authority has been transferred to the smallest units in the system which are schools. This kind of reform is often called *School-Based Management*. Management at the school level also occurs in reforms in which schools compete against each other for resources and for students. Examples of this strategy are reviewed in the section on Market Efficiency.

Within the Professional Expertise position, reforms vary according to whether authority is transferred solely to principals (called administrative control); whether teachers are included (called professional control; Murphy and Beck, 1995); and the extent of community participation.

Teacher reactions to proposals for school-based management depend on how it will affect their participation in decision-making. If teachers believe the reform may increase the power of principals relative to teachers, they may (as in France) resist the reform. In other countries, teachers (and their unions) have seen school-based management as a means to ensure their participation in school decision-making.

For example, in the Los Angeles Unified School District of the USA (about 700,000 students), the teachers' union successfully included school-based management as part of its contract negotiations with the school board. Schools now elect leadership councils with responsibility for staff development, student discipline guidelines, scheduling and some local budget funds. The councils include parents as members, but are chaired by the principal and the school representatives of the teachers' union. Some version of school-based management has been backed by the two national teachers' unions in all major cities of the USA.

Some school-based management reforms intend authority to be shared with community members (e.g. parents, employers, unions, political associations, and religious organizations), but end up with the experts making all-important decisions. Most often responsibility is taken on by the principals, as for example in Sri Lanka (Govinda, 1997).

The power of principals often increases, for two reasons. First, systems that implemented school-based management some time ago report that eventually teachers grow tired of the extra burden of participating in decision-making. In some instances, e.g. Spain, the disincentives for participation are so high that teachers reject the opportunity to be elected principal by their colleagues, although they welcome membership on the school council (Hanson, 1995). In other cases, external stakeholders (especially higher levels of expert authority) seek a single person (the principal) to hold accountable. Sometimes central governments take control away from teachers and give it to principals, as in Victoria, Australia (Pascoe and Pascoe, 1998).

Impact on management

The impact of this kind of reform on management depends primarily on the incentives offered to schools for changes in performance. These in turn depend on the ability of some external agency to assess the performance of the school, and to hold it accountable. Some countries use external examinations to alert supervising bodies to poor school performance. For example, in Thailand, many principals quit their jobs in shame after their schools were identified by the central ministry as having 'poor' examination results. Those who remained received special training in management (Wheeler et al., 1989).

The successful implementation of school-based management run by professionals depends primarily on three kinds of actions:

- objective measurement of the performance of the school, using indicators of student performance, parent and community satisfaction, and access to resources;
- establishment of a reward system for good performance, especially of teachers;
- improvement of the level of professional expertise of those who participate in decision-making. For example, parents and community members can participate if they are made 'expert' through training.

Community participation in the professionally-governed system

Most professional educators agree that community and especially parent participation makes an important contribution to their work. In general, however, the kind of participation that is sought is not in governance or school management (and certainly not in management of more central bodies). What is sought is support by the community for what the 'school', that is, the teachers and principal, are attempting to do. This support can take the form of supply of labour and materials for construction or maintenance of buildings, ensuring that students do their homework, participation in school activities in which students perform, and fund-raising. For example, professional educators may encourage the formation of parent/teacher organizations, but only to support what the professional experts already have decided.

The effectiveness of this strategy – professional control of critical decisions, parental and community participation in less important matters – is seen in the success of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC). In the BRAC programme teachers are selected from their communities, trained, and supervised by centrally located BRAC staff. More than 32,000 teachers are supervised by 6 regional managers, 40 area education managers, 205 teams-in-charge, 417 programme officers (POs) and 1,138 programme assistants. Each aspect of the work of these staff is carefully programmed. For example, the POs visit schools twice a month, armed with a list of 50 indicators of school performance. They review teachers' lesson plans and attendance books. Parents are limited to responsibility for cleaning, maintenance and security, set schedules, make sure students attend regularly, and monitor teacher attendance (Rugh and Bossert, 1998). BRAC was initiated by an NGO, and is autonomous from (but co-ordinates with) the ministry of education. Despite the fact that it is a private venture, however, BRAC is an example of an expert-governed decentralization reform.

The logic for restriction on parent participation is the following. Time on task is a major determinant of amount of learning. Professional teachers control how much time students spend learning in class;

parents are responsible for time studying at home. Learning outcomes of students are related to how much time parents spend with children on homework, more than to the extent of parental participation in school activities. Parent support for the school can also make an enormous difference for resources available for instructional materials and teachers. In other words, experts are best qualified to organize the teaching and learning process.

In some cases, low levels of community participation are blamed on the community's failure to appreciate the value of education. Professional educators can choose to make up for low participation by increasing the intensity of their own actions to maintain student time on learning. Or, they can attempt to increase (parental and) community participation through work with the community, for example, in community development activities.

In time, this particular application of expert knowledge could result in an eventual shift to a form of Political Legitimacy. In the Lok Jumbish project in India, for example, NGO experts worked to involve in decision-making on education, those community members (especially women) previously shut out by village leaders linked with more central authorities (Govinda, 1999). Over time this changed the balance of power at the village level, creating a form of political decision-making for education. In many other cases, however, increased involvement by less sensitive external 'experts' in the local community has increased the dependency and sense of powerlessness of local citizens.

Summary

The logic of the Professional Expertise perspective on governance assumes that there is a small set of 'best practices' which, if implemented, will in all circumstances result in high levels of performance. Decentralization makes sense, therefore, only if those who will make decisions at lower levels in the system know and can carry out the best practices. Experts, by their training, are always the best choice to make decisions, but it is possible to bring persons at the local level up to a sufficient level of expertise. These can be principals, teachers, parents and other community members.

If a sufficient level of expertise can be achieved among local community members, then decisions made through a *political* process will be the same as those made by *experts*. 'Democratic decentralization', given this position, is easier to achieve in countries with highly homogeneous populations with high or equitably distributed levels of education and training.

3. Market efficiency

The Market Efficiency position distinguishes between governance of the *production* of education, and governance of its *consumption*. At present most countries assign to the state monopoly control over the production of education, and require all children to be educated in state-controlled or state-approved schools. In a market system, however, individuals have freedom both in the production of education, and in choice of where children will be schooled (Patrinos and Ariasingham, 1997).

Proponents of the market position assert that professionals lack and can never have the knowledge necessary to satisfy the desires and needs of those whom education is supposed to serve. There is nothing in the training of educators, nor of economists, that enables them to understand what people want. The imposition of a professional solution deprives some consumers of the education that would be most appropriate for them. Rule by professionals is necessarily a form of tyranny in which people are forced to consume what others think is good for them. This is, of course, the same argument used in criticisms of collectivism, managed economies, and central planning.

The market position also attacks the political process as a means to satisfy the legitimate desires and ambitions of members of a society. Politics is necessarily inefficient and corrupt. Democracy, with its insistence on majority rule, limits the freedom of minorities. That is,

> "... democracy is essentially coercive. The winners get to use public authority to impose their policies on the losers. Teachers' unions, for example, might prevail over the opposition of administrators or parents on some issues. On others, business

groups might succeed in imposing reforms fought by the unions" (Chubb and Moe, 1990, p. 28).

The argument goes on to assert that democratic politics are ideological rather than rational. It is difficult to shift away from democratically defined policies, even when they prove to be inefficient and ineffective. **The market is claimed to be the best way to use information about what people want and what satisfies them.** If school finance depended on satisfying consumers, rather than professionals or governments, there would be no money for bad schools. Competition between schools for support by consumers, it is hypothesized, will result in innovation, improvement of education quality, and elimination of bad schools.

Parents of students are a major group of consumers. Ultimately, say market proponents, parents pay for the education of their children, as part of the community that supplies the revenues of the state. Parents have a personal stake in the education of their child. Each parent has detailed information about the child's interests and abilities. Each parent is better able than any teacher to sense when an instructional method or curriculum is failing to achieve what the parent seeks. Teachers are distracted by the demands of the many children in their classroom, the parent attends to a smaller number. Consumers do not have to be professionals in production to know when a product is good, that is, satisfies their expectations.

A similar argument can be made for the direct participation of employers in decision-making about education. They, better than professional educators or economists, understand the human resource requirements of their enterprises. They have much more information about the consequences of particular forms of schooling than do those who provide it. In addition, employers ultimately pay for education as part of the total tax burden in any society.

Marketization does not require privatization

The argument for marketization of education is often confused with privatization. This is misleading. **Private control of the production of education is neither a necessary nor a sufficient**

condition for the existence of an education market. When a community (a town or village) is given autonomy in the design and management of its school system, that system does not cease to be a public system. If several autonomous schools offer different kinds of education, and community members can choose which of those kinds of education they wish, there is a market.

Level to which authority is transferred

Markets can be said to exist when three conditions are met:

- **there is variety in the quality and content of education provided;**
- **consumers are informed about options; and**
- **consumers are able to choose among the options.**

According to this definition, there is no market if all public schools are the same and private schools follow a national curriculum and use the same teachers as public schools. There is no market if the only alternative schools are too expensive, or located far away.

The 'consumer' in the market strategy does not have to be the individual student and parents/guardians, but could be a community, or even a provincial or state government or a private corporation that chooses among educational producers. In other words, it is possible to create a market mechanism within a public education system, to create opportunities for choice that are accessible to all consumers whether they are individual persons, corporations or governments.

The provision of choice has been initiated in three ways:

- through mechanisms to allow consumers to choose the school to which they send their children;
- by public funding of alternative provision of education; and
- as a result of NGO funding of alternative provision.

The first strategy makes most sense in an education system already characterized by variety in provision of education (variation in curriculum, instructional methods, quality of teachers). If private

schools already enjoy considerable freedom, for example, they may have developed methods and curricula different from public schools. If significant decentralization of public education has already occurred, variations may have developed across communities or districts. What remains is to inform parents about variations in quality and content, and to create the means for them to exercise choice of schooling for their children. In some countries this means elimination of geographic restrictions on where parents can send their children to school.

Once attendance boundaries have been eliminated, a primary obstacle to school choice is physical access. This may not be a problem in cities where public schools are close together, but in rural areas parents face serious transportation costs. In Jamaica, for example, rural students travel as much as 10 miles to reach their preference. To implement choice in its reform, New Zealand found it necessary to increase school spaces by 20 per cent and to expand school-bus travel. Most choice schemes have not faced the issue of transportation.

The most common form of *school choice* is a voucher given to parents equivalent to the annual expenditure per child in a public school (Cohn, 1997). The vouchers can be used in any school. In Colombia, vouchers are used to increase school attendance by children in low-income families in areas which have space in private schools but none in public schools.

Charter schools

Public funding of alternative schools has been implemented most frequently by commissioning, contracting or chartering a group responsible for provision. In some countries, *charters* or contracts are given primarily to private groups, while in other countries publicly elected groups govern most charter schools. Schools may also be organized as co-operatives owned by participating teachers (as in Chile), or as corporations owned by parents or others.

Public funding of privately governed education is not a new phenomenon, although the concept of the school charter is relatively new. A number of European countries have for some time provided grants to private schools. In Belgium, for example, public funds contribute to the

finance of schools run by different religious organizations. Many of these schools began as private institutions, but were later recognized and supported by the state, seeking to ensure access to education for all sectors of society. They are run as not-for-profit organizations.

A frequently cited example of private charter schools in a developing country are those created in Chile following a reform initiated in 1974. Major aspects of governance of primary and secondary education were transferred to municipalities, including authority to contract with private organizations for the provision of schooling. The central ministry retained control over curriculum, but municipal and chartered schools were given control over a budget allocation based on enrolments, and authority to hire and fire teachers. Chartered private schools were allowed to supplement the government subsidy but could not impose fees (Malpica Faustor, 1994). Although total enrolment did not increase, private schools (both fee charging and non-fee charging) increased their share from 23 per cent to 40 per cent of total enrolments.

In the USA, on the other hand, almost all of the 900 charter schools begun in recent years are public, that is, controlled by elected school boards. The charter school movement in the USA is a response to growing complaints by parents and community groups about the quality of public education. Charter schools differ from ordinary public schools in that they do not have to conform to most state and local district regulations (including staffing and curriculum) but must achieve specified standards of student performance. This is the same approach as is used in New Zealand, where all public schools are now chartered.

Involvement of NGOs

A third way in which alternative schools develop is through NGO funding and technical assistance. In Africa, the Save the Children Foundation, with partial funding from the United States Agency for International Development and permission from the central government, encourages small communities to create and fund their own schools. These schools use locally developed curricula and hire local persons who are trained as teachers by the Save the Children Foundation. At present, there are more than 600 such schools in

Mali, and others in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, and Malawi (DeStefano, 1996). Many of these schools are created in villages that previously had no schools; others replace existing government-run schools. Within a short period, communities are asked to assume all costs of operating their school. This is possible because unit costs are one-tenth of the cost of government schools. The benefit/cost ratio of these schools is not yet established.

Although the stated intention of the sponsors of these projects is to offer parents choice in where to educate their children, the conditions for a true market most often are not met. In Mali, for example, government schools have disappeared from villages in which alternative private schools were created. In areas of low population density, the market approach to decentralization (as opposed to outright privatization) can only be achieved by maintaining schools too small to be efficient.

Impact on management

If the term 'school-based management' is used to refer to local control by experts, then market-controlled schools are defined as 'self-managing' (Caldwell and Spinks, 1992). The two should follow different management strategies. In school-based management, emphasis is on applying expert knowledge to a local context. In a school in the market system, the primary task of managers is to provide that kind of education which attracts the largest demand (that is, which generates the largest gross revenue) and which has the lowest cost to produce. Achieving this balance ensures the survival and growth of the organization. If the school is to be self-financing, 'what education is best' is defined by what kind of education the consumers are willing to buy. This means that marketing, that is, the identification and stimulation of parent demand for the kind of education the organization can produce most efficiently, becomes a primary task of the manager.

Most choice or voucher reforms *increase* the responsibilities of the school principal. A clear example of this is the United Kingdom, where the 1988 Education Act gave schools control over their own budgets and personnel (previously administered by the elected local education authority) and eliminated school attendance boundaries (i.e.

gave parents choice). Teacher participation in decision-making declined as school heads assumed more and more responsibility and authority. Unlike managers in centralized systems who spend much time interpreting central office directives, these managers focus primarily on developing a steady income stream and keeping costs low. In Australia, the tasks of the principal are described as goal setting, need identification, priority setting, policy-making, planning, budgeting, implementing, and evaluating together with the whole community.

There are mixed models of Expert and Market governance. For example, a Superintendent in New York City encouraged teachers in a poor district to break their high school into a number of smaller schools, each with a unique curriculum and style of management. Parents were invited to choose a school for their children. Most management functions in these schools were handled by teachers (Tyack, 1992). This arrangement created a quasi-market situation, although most operating decisions were made by teachers. This reform worked well for about 10 years: attendance increased and drop-outs were reduced; average achievement scores rose, moving the District from about 25th out of 32 to about 10th. Over time, however, teachers tired of the heavy workload required to manage the small schools, and performance levels have declined.

Community participation and market efficiency

The separation of provision of education and the consumption of education changes the kind of participation expected of communities. The market mechanism works best when consumers inform themselves about choices and exercise their preferences. Competition between providers of revenues from consumers is expected to lead to improvement of provision as the less desired providers lose market share and eventually are eliminated. However, consumers by their choices affect only the continuation of what is being produced, not what producers decide to put on the market. Producers often create demand for products not initially desired by consumers. This is called 'marketing'. In that respect Market Decentralization shares the perspective of Professional Decentralization: the community is best kept at a distance.

Efficiency is not always a concern of private education

Where clients are not the principal source of finance, efficiency may not be the primary concern of the private school. In this case, parental and community participation can take on considerable importance. The NGO called *Fe y Alegria* (Faith and Happiness) controlled by the Jesuit Order of the Catholic Church, runs non-fee-charging schools in 12 countries of Latin America. These schools are financed by subsidies from ministries of education (salaries of teachers and principal), foundations and international assistance agencies, and voluntary fees from the local community. Schools are opened when a community invites the assistance of *Fe y Alegria*. Community groups build the school, and a parent association is organized to work with the principal (chosen by *Fe y Alegria*, often paid by the ministry). Parents are expected to participate in their children's studies, and to be actively engaged in school programmes. Most schools become community centres that take on development projects and cultural activities. Many schools raise fruit and vegetables. The official curriculum is supplemented with locally developed materials (Rugh and Bossert, 1998).

Privatization as a form of decentralization.

There are three major forms of 'private' school governance, arranged in an increasing degree of "decentralization':

- publicly subsidized, privately owned and managed schools which conform to government guidelines and do not charge fees;
- publicly subsidized, privately owned and managed schools which enjoy relative autonomy and do charge fees; and
- privately financed schools that are autonomous from public control.

Almost all countries have some private education. In very few countries, however, do the second and third kind of private schools taken together enrol more than 10 per cent of primary and secondary enrolment. In some countries, however, as much as half the total enrolment is in the first kind of private school. Almost all proposals for public funding of private education today are for the first form of school governance.

In some countries demand for private education exceeds supply because of government restrictions on creation and expansion of private schools. The restriction may take several forms:

- an outright ban on construction or increased enrolment;
- a ceiling on the size of tuition that can be charged which makes expansion financially impossible; or
- insistence on inclusion of a certain proportion of students not members of the dominant group in the school, which reduces the attractiveness of the school.

Expansion of private education will increase the total number of children in school only under certain circumstances. Expansion of fee-charging private schools will result in greater overall enrolment if the supply of publicly financed, free private schools, and public schools, is insufficient to meet demand for schooling. Increasing the number of free private schools will increase overall enrolments only if the supply of public schools is less than demand. In Viet Nam, for example, the government allowed expansion of private education rather than rapid expansion of public schools. Countries that have not invested in public education in the past will experience an expansion in total enrolments if they increase spending, whether that money goes to public or to private schools.

Summary

Choice comes in two forms, public and private. Public choice makes it possible to offer communities a choice in the kind of education their children will receive. If the reform also includes participation in critical decision-making (as in New Zealand), then Public Choice moves closer to Political Legitimacy. Private choice increases the freedom of individual parents but seldom is organized to increase the capacity of the community to act collectively. The role of the manager is more demanding in both forms. Managers have to be able to design and build new forms of education, and in the Public version of choice to do so together with teachers and perhaps with members of the community. At the same time, managers must constantly watch costs and seek revenue.

III. Which decisions should be relocated?

The first section of this chapter describes the location of decision-making in a number of different countries. The major interest is in which decisions are located where: locally, provincially, nationally. In the second section of the chapter a scheme for the analysis of location of all major decisions is presented.

Variations in location of decisions

Countries vary in the extent to which preconditions for decentralization are present. Combined with different histories of development, and different objectives for decentralization, they have produced a variety of ways to govern education. The effectiveness of the solutions chosen should not be established by comparison with other countries, with other preconditions, histories and objectives. What appears to be an 'ineffective' solution judged by some common standard, might in fact have been the only solution available to a given group of decision-makers.

The objective of this section is to demonstrate the variety of ways in which countries have distributed authority for education. The comparisons make clear that 'decentralization' should not be regarded as a unitary phenomenon, and that there may be several different ways to structure the governance of education that are effective.

Comparing location of governance in industrialized and developing countries

The first source of data is from national education systems in 10 industrialized and developing countries, including newly independent countries. The selection of countries was not intended to constitute a representative sample, that is, one cannot generalize from these findings to all countries. Assessments of the location of decisions were made by a single research group and based on the reading of documents,

articles, manuscripts, and official statistical files. Categories and the decisions within them were developed *a priori* and applied to the case material (Rideout and Ural, 1993).

Table 1 describes the location of decision-making across the 10 countries in the study. The decisions are listed by their categories: Governance; School organization; Financing; Personnel training; Curriculum and instruction; Monitoring and evaluation; and Research. In some countries, decisions are made at more than one level, in other words authority for decision-making is shared. In this group of countries most decisions are made most often by central governments, but some decisions (for example, evaluation and discipline of students, monitoring of examinations) are made more often at other levels.

Table 1. Location of decisions by category of decision
(Percentage of countries reporting decisions made at that level)

Category	Central	Regional	District	Local
Governance:				
Policy	90	40	10	10
Planning	90	40	10	30
Implementation	90	30	50	40
School organization:				
Structure	90	10	10	0
Minimum requirements	90	10	0	0
Financing:				
Recurrent	80	50	30	50
Development	90	40	30	60
Training:				
In-service	80	50	20	30
Pre-service	70	50	10	0
Management	60	40	60	50

Curriculum:				
Subjects	90	30	0	0
Content	90	20	10	20
Textbooks	80	20	10	30
Textbook provision	70	30	20	40
Language policy	100	20	10	0
Instructional methods	70	30	20	20
Evaluation of teachers	60	50	60	70
Monitoring:				
Accreditation	70	30	0	20
Examinations	70	30	30	90
Pupil promotions	70	0	30	70
Discipline	10	10	30	90
Data systems	60	50	50	60
School evaluation	90	40	40	30
Research:				
Needs	90	30	10	20
Conduct	80	50	20	20
Implementation	60	20	30	10

NB: Rows add to more than 100 per cent because decisions are made in two or more levels.

Source: Rideout and Ural, 1993.

Table 2 reports the proportion of all decisions made primarily at each of the four levels by country. The countries range from the most to the fewest proportion of the decisions made at the central level. The results indicate a variety of arrangements for sharing authority for decisions about education. In five of the countries (Zimbabwe, Senegal, Malaysia, France, Namibia) central and (district or) local organizations make most of the decisions about education. In three

countries, authority is shared primarily between central and regional (state) organizations (Mexico, Nigeria, India). In the United Kingdom, decisions about the curriculum are made by the central government, while in the USA they are shared between state and district organizations.

Table 2. Location of decisions in various countries
(Percentage of all decisions by level)

Country	Central	Regional	District	Local
Zimbabwe	81	0	3	16
Senegal	76	3	0	21
Malaysia	63	10	10	17
France	59	10	22	10
Namibia	57	5	14	25
Mexico	45	25	13	17
Nigeria	42	40	0	18
India	38	38	10	14
United Kingdom	36	7	25	32
United States of America	6	36	33	24

N.B.: The 'regional' level refers to states or provinces. In France, 'district' refers to the 26 academies. In Nigeria, districts are combined with local.

Source: Rideout and Ural, 1993.

Comparing location of governance in industrialized countries

A second study assessed the location of decision-making in 14 OECD (industrialized) countries. The results of the two studies are not fully comparable. Only three of the countries in the OECD study

were included in the first study[1]. As the objective of the second study was to assess the autonomy of *schools*, attention was given only to those decisions that might be made by a school in a fully decentralized system. The 34 decisions included overlapped only partly with the first study. Not included, for example, were decisions about the length of the compulsory cycle, training for teachers and administrators, and financial assistance to students. Location of decisions is described only for broad categories and not specific decisions.

A summary of the results is presented in *Table 3*, which shows the proportion of decisions taken at each of four levels of government for public schools across the 14 countries. Schools make most decisions, as many as 65 per cent of those are concerned with Organization of Instruction. Lower Intermediate units of governance are concerned most with issues of Resource Allocation and Central Governments with issues of Organization of Instruction.

Table 3. Location of four categories of decisions in 14 OECD countries
(Percentage of decisions in category at each level)

Category of decision	Central Government	Upper Intermediate	Lower Intermediate	School
Organization of instruction	28	2	5	65
Planning and structures	23	27	22	28
Personnel management	15	20	29	36
Resource allocation	5	10	38	47

NB: The Local level is the school; Lower Intermediate is the district, municipal or communal organization responsible for education; Upper Intermediate refers to an elected regional (state, provincial) government or a decentralized service of the central government.

Source: OECD, Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, 1995.

1. The countries included were: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the USA.

As in the first study, these results indicate that there is considerable variation among countries with respect to the location of various categories of decisions. Furthermore, within countries, decisions are made at more than one level. This is reflected in *Table 4*, which shows for each country where decisions are made. In Austria, for example, some decisions are made at each of the four levels. In no country are all decisions made at only one level. Recall that the study included only decisions likely to be made by completely decentralized schools. Even in highly decentralized countries such as Ireland and New Zealand, significant proportions of decisions are made at levels other than the school: some decisions are made by the Central Government. Similarly, in the USA, often considered to have a highly decentralized education system, we see that most decisions are made at the Lower Intermediate (district) level, which shape some authority with individual schools. In Spain, where schools also enjoy considerable autonomy (for example, electing their directors or principals), the Central Government still makes many decisions.

This group of 14 countries represents a wide variety of combinations of location of authority. As shown in *Table 4*, Ireland and New Zealand have highly autonomous schools. Belgium and the USA have autonomous districts or communities. Decisions are shared between Schools and Districts (communities) in Denmark, Finland, Germany, Norway and Sweden. Switzerland locates decisions between Communities and Regional governments. Some countries – Austria, France, Portugal and Spain – locate decisions across three levels of government.

This picture is complicated further if the location of authority is depicted separately for the various cycles of primary and secondary schools. In some countries relatively more decisions are located in Lower and Upper Secondary schools (Grades 5-12) than in Primary schools (Grades 1 to 4). In a few countries more decisions are located in Primary schools than in Upper Secondary schools. In some countries there is no difference across levels in terms of where decisions are located.

Table 4. Location of decisions within 14 OECD countries
(Percentage of all decisions by level)

Category of decision	Central Government	Higher Intermediate	Lower Intermediate	School
Austria	28	26	8	38
Belgium		25	50	25
Denmark	15		44	41
Finland	13		47	40
France	33	36		31
Germany	7	18	42	33
Ireland	19		8	73
New Zealand	29			71
Norway	23		45	32
Portugal	57	3		40
Spain	33	13	26	28
Sweden	4		48	48
Switzerland		50	40	10
USA		3	71	26

NB: Empty cells reflect the absence of a governmental unit at that level with authority for the kinds of decisions considered.

Source: OECD, Centre for Educational Research and Development, 1995.

The complexity of the concept of 'decentralization' is also illustrated by consideration of what is meant by 'authority to make decisions'. The OECD study defined three modes of decision-making: complete autonomy; made after consultation with another authority

at an adjoining level; made within guidelines established by another authority, generally at the highest level. Most decisions were coded as autonomous, but about one-third was considered to be governed by relatively narrow guidelines established by central government.

The patterns varied significantly across countries. In Finland, for example, most of the decisions made at the School level were taken with guidelines. In the USA few decisions were scored as autonomous: they were equally divided between guided and consultative. The patterns also varied across categories of decisions, and across levels in the school system (Primary, Lower and Upper Secondary). In other words, the location of decisions in each country is unique, and within each country the levels of the Primary-Secondary system often vary in their degree of 'decentralization'.

Several conclusions can be drawn from these comparisons. Research on decentralization to date has presented conflicting results, because the unit of analysis has been too gross. For example, consider assessment of the impact of transferring authority over teacher hiring to district councils. Districts are likely to vary significantly with respect as to where decisions related to hiring are made, and some of these related decisions may be those that most impact indicators of the success of the reform. The researcher ends up treating as identical districts those that vary considerably in degree of decentralization.

A strategic approach is to be preferred over a 'best practices' approach. The number of effective combinations of decisions is large; there are many ways to improve education. Consequently decision-makers and managers do not have to maintain a single approach over time, but instead can vary where decisions are made according to the current situation of the organization. A strategic approach would define the principles that guide choices in situations, rather than specify the fixed structural changes to be made.

Finally, a number of the countries compared are considered to have well-performing education systems. This suggests that **effective governance can be achieved in several different ways. It also testifies that the democratizing benefits of decentralization can be achieved without diminishing the quality of public education.**

Location of decisions about funding of education

A final way of looking at centralization/decentralization is in terms of how much education is 'private', that is, not under the control of any government at any level. 'Under control' is a relative term: no government would allow, for example, a school to teach subversion and insurrection. All countries impose some regulations on even the most autonomous private schools. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to consider that 'private' schools are more autonomous than public schools. If it is assumed that private schools are individually owned, then increases in the proportion of private schools increases the dispersal of authority. *Table 5* describes the sources of funding of education in 127 countries.

Table 5. Number of countries by ownership and source of funding, 1975

	Source of funding				
	Central government only		Central and local government		
Ownership	No private, or Regulated private	Subsidized private	No private, or Regulated private	Subsidized private	Total
No private	15		7		22
Minimal private	14	3		6	23
Private mostly in Secondary	16	10	8	4	38
Private mostly in Primary	4	5	1		10
Private both levels	9	7	4	4	24
Mostly private	2	7		1	10
Total	60	32	20	15	127

Source: Cummings and Riddell, 1994.

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In some countries (for example, Belgium) many schools are 'private'. On the other hand, much of the funding for these schools is public, that is, comes from a government. These publicly funded, privately owned, schools increase participation in decision-making about education without increasing social disparities. The critical factor is not public support of 'private' schools but instead governance structures which pursue social equity.

Some 47 of the 127 countries included in *Table 5* subsidize private education, and in 10 countries most schools are private. Private schools are more common at the secondary level, but slightly more governments are willing to subsidize primary than secondary schools. Subsidization is more common in countries in which school finance is shared by central and local governments.

Summary

To restate the argument of this section: **it makes little sense to talk of 'decentralization' as a unitary process or phenomenon. Comparisons of countries or education systems as more or less decentralized hide a great deal of variation within those countries. In order to understand how to 'decentralize' a system, it is important to focus on specific domains of authority to transfer from one level to another. The task should be to understand which specific decisions (or, more likely, categories of decisions) should be made at what location within the governance structure of the system.** In order to do that, who should make what decisions at what level of the organization should be specified. We turn now to that task.

Categories of decisions about education

Decisions for which authority can be transferred can be placed in one of five categories: Mission, Operations, Personnel, Client, Finance[2]. The categories are not watertight, but instead are intended primarily as a guide for discussion. These categories are used for two reasons: to guide the discussion of what authority might

2. This section draws heavily on the work of Davies (1994).

be transferred; and to focus attention on the complex set of issues involved in proposals for decentralization.

The neatness of the categories hides considerable complexity, as was seen in the earlier discussion of the extent of decentralization. **Decisions are not mutually exclusive; a single decision may affect more than one aspect of the organization.** For example, an organization receiving authority may decide to change its mission from formation of human resources for the national economy, to development of the local community. This change would affect also the clients served by the education system.

Second, decisions within and across categories are interdependent. For example, an Operations decision to evaluate teacher performance in terms of student learning requires decisions about: what domains of learning to assess; methods for assessment; who will carry out the assessment; frequency of evaluation; sanctions for low performance; and so on. The implementation of these decisions in turn requires other decisions about procedures, for example, how to administer and score tests, and so on. The initial 'decision' is most often a nested set of decisions made at different levels of the organization. For example, a local school council might decide to evaluate teachers using a test of student learning constructed by a national organization. Therefore, national systems of education often considered as 'centralized' vary considerably in where decisions are made.

1. Decisions about the mission of the organization

1(a) Who sets the mission of the organization and who can change it?

The term 'mission' refers to goals or end purposes of an organization. National constitutions often announce broad missions, such as providing education to all citizens. More concrete statements of mission may refer to the nature and qualities of the education to be provided. For example, the Egyptian Ministry of Education announced as its mission an education to create 'scientific men and women' and to 'enhance Egyptian character'. Some stakeholders call for the mission of education to be 'preparation for global competitiveness'.

Even local organizations have missions, either assigned or self-defined. For example, the mission of a school district could be to provide the best-quality education possible to the largest number of eligible children. The periodic review and renewal of a mission statement contributes to an organization's efforts to mobilize member support for its objectives. Poorly defined statements make it difficult to assess the performance of an organization, and encourage members to pursue personal objectives.

The definition of Mission should be an activity within the Political Domain. As many different stakeholders as possible should be involved in the process, to ensure civic commitment to the organization's activities. Mission statements are more easily changed if they are contained in decrees or legislation, rather than in constitutions, and if they stand alone rather than being bound together with legal specifications for all aspects of education. Especially difficult is the changing of an 'organic law of education', as proposed changes will provoke reactions from Distributors as well as Producers and Users.

In organizations governed by Professional Expertise, producers tend to have most say in defining the mission. On the other hand, in systems where the Political Legitimacy perspective is dominant, users are likely to be more visible in defining the mission. When users, in the Political Legitimacy perspective, redefine the mission, producers will resist. The resistance is a reaction to real or perceived loss of power to control the definition of general purposes and goals for basic education. There is a tension between popular participation in defining the mission of education and the professional insistence that only those knowledgeable about the needs of society should inform the debate. Greater democratic participation strengthens the state's role by grounding it on a more inclusive foundation as users tend to embrace a much wider range of citizenry.

From the Political and Market perspectives, all citizens are capable now of participating in decisions about the mission for education. From the Professional perspective, debate about mission should be informed by those knowledgeable about the 'needs' of society.

1 (b) Who determines if the organization is pursuing the mission established for it?

Decisions about compliance with mission are covered in the Legal Domain. Clear mission statements make it possible to develop measures of organizational performance. Depending on the mission, these may be measures of coverage, of internal efficiency, of quality and student achievement, of performance of graduates in the labour market or in society in general. Measures of performance may be useful to authorities that want to defend their administration. Organizations without pre-defined performance objectives can be faulted for not achieving what they may not have been pursuing. In organizations governed by Political Legitimacy, the definition of mission fulfilment may be 'qualitative' and 'subjective', that is, based on reports from Users of their experiences. In Professionally controlled organizations 'objectivity' and quantification exclude lay citizen participation in assessment. Both kinds of indicators may be used to assess organizations in which governance is according to the Market perspective.

In the name of standardization and equality, central agencies generally seek control over criteria for assessment of mission fulfilment, even in highly decentralized systems such as those of New Zealand and the USA. The introduction of external assessment devices, currently recommended by the World Bank and some other international agencies, have the effect of centralizing decisions about the mission of education, and of shifting decisions about Mission from a Political to a Professional perspective.

The assessment of the performance of an education system is more difficult than that of other government agencies or private corporations. Education serves multiple stakeholders and pursues multiple, often competing goals. There is no one 'bottom line', no measure of 'profit and loss' that tells in a glance how well an education organization is doing. Evaluation may assess coverage, efficiency, achievement, relevance to the community, relevance to the productive sector, and social equity. Professional decentralization reforms find this requirement especially daunting. Local professionals may be

qualified to assess student learning and provide data on enrolments, but they have no skills to assess how well the schools prepare for work.

An inclusionary approach that involves several layers of political decision-makers (e.g. local communities, states, nation) has a better chance of designing an assessment that responds fairly and comprehensively to all stakeholders.

1(c) Who can decide to shut down the organization?

A central agency (e.g. a ministry of education) may decide on the mission of education, but transfer authority for decisions about the continuance of local schools to intermediate or local governments. The decision to intervene in a school, or to shut it down, can be independent of control over finance. For example, schools are financed by local districts in the USA, but state and federal governments are involved in determining if they conform to the official mission. A school may be closed by a local authority for lack of funds, or by a state authority for failure to conform to its mission.

Decisions to shut down a school may require expert knowledge (for example, about population shifts), but certainly also require political participation, as many stakeholders are affected.

Decisions of this kind can be handled either in the Bureaucratic Domain (in a Professional-dominated system) or in the Civic Domain (in a Political Legitimacy system).

1(d) Who is accountable? Who assumes the risk of failure to fulfil the mission?

Risk of failure most often is assigned to those directly responsible for implementation. For example, local school officials are sanctioned when their organizations fail to carry out the mission established at a higher level. In most countries today, teachers and other education professionals are blamed for the presumed failure of their organizations because most governance conforms to the Professional Expertise perspective.

Exceptions are those few instances in which authority has shifted to a Political Legitimacy perspective. In these cases, blame for failure shifts to non-professional authorities, for example, to lay school boards in Chicago, the State of Kentucky and in rural Mali, and to mayors in the municipalities of Colombia.

Failure to specify the Domain in which these decisions will be made can result in time- and energy-consuming conflicts, as various stakeholders vie for control.

2. Decisions about how to structure and operate the education organization

2(a) Who will decide how the organization should function?

In a Professional Expertise decentralization, the question is which of these decisions will be transferred downward, and which will continue to be made at the more central level. With the exception of Credentials, all of these decisions are made at the school level in some countries; in other countries all are made at the intermediate or central level. The difference probably reflects levels of education and training of administrative personnel and teachers. What is clear is that central control of the structure and operation of schools results in many inefficiencies. Schedules do not fit local requirements, buildings are climatically inappropriate, personnel are too many or too few or of the wrong kind, and evaluation serves only to screen children rather than to contribute to the teaching-learning process. In many countries, local and district officials are more competent than those in the centre to make decisions about school structure and operation.

Professionals are more qualified than community members to make decisions directly related to the instructional process, but may not be more competent with respect to those that refer to time and space. At present, professionals make decisions about schedules in terms of their own convenience, which sometimes disadvantages parents and students.

In schools run according to the Market perspective, parents may have no participation in these operational and structural decisions. In

short, decisions of this kind for the most part fall in the Bureaucratic Domain even when Professionals do not make other decisions. In a Political Legitimacy decentralization reform, initial activities are in the Civic Domain, as citizens determine which authority will be transferred to or held by Professionals and which will remain with elected bodies.

The **structural** decisions include:

1. Time: length of the cycle (how many years in primary, for example); number of days in the school year; hours in the school day.
2. Facilities: characteristics of buildings; size of buildings (number of classrooms, etc.); equipment and furnishing; location.
3. Curriculum: selection of subjects; time for subjects; content of subjects.
4. Instructional materials: approved list of materials (textbooks).
5. Personnel: number of positions (usually as a function of type of school, subjects, number of students); pupil/teacher ratio.
6. Evaluation: structure and content of end-of-cycle and admission examinations.
7. Credentials: kind and requirements of diplomas.

The **operational decisions** include:

1. Time: schedule of hours; sequence of classes in the week.
2. Facilities: maintenance.
3. Curriculum: sequence of subjects; assignment of students to classes; instructional methods.
4. Instructional materials: selection of textbooks.
5. Personnel: instructional methods.
6. Evaluation: content and frequency of quizzes (within course examinations).
7. Credentials: awarding of diplomas.

Decisions of this kind should be made 'up close' in order to maximize use of information. Management by remote control is a sure path to inefficiency. On the other hand, ***unless there is local capacity for management, there is no advantage to making decisions where action takes place.*** **The Principle of Subsidiarity argues**

not just for moving decisions to the site of action, but also making local decision-makers competent.

The competence that is required for decentralization to be maximally effective is not skill in carrying out decisions made elsewhere. Local decision-makers must be able to decide when a problem exists, when rules should be carried out, but also when to change the rules.

2(b) Who will decide whether various parts run well together and who can vary inputs of labour and capital to improve operation?

These decisions are essentially technical in nature and should be distinguished from the political decisions to be made by community members. Local managers per se should make decisions about the operation. This will require training in evaluation of how inputs and process variations link to outputs. It will require provision of timely information to managers about these linkages. Managers must be trained not just to carry out orders from above, but also to use locally generated information to deviate from orders as necessary to improve performance.

The rigidity introduced by the logic of Standardization discourages local managers from using local information, and is believed to be a prime cause of the inefficiencies that plague schools in many countries. Training, or perhaps 're-education' is required at various levels in ministries of education to relax 'inspection' systems that inhibit local management. This training is a Bureaucratic Domain activity.

The call for charter schools is an attempt to break the deadly hold of bureaucratic rigidity. Managers in charter schools are freed from these controls and can, if they have adequate information systems, make situationally relevant decisions about operation. As has been noted, charter schools can be run within the Professional Expertise approach to decentralization. In fact, **managers should be 'professionals' and not hired on the basis of their political position. This can be accomplished within a reform dominated by Political Legitimacy objectives. Elected school boards can hire, and supervise, professional managers.**

Many education systems provide little formal training in management for their school administrators. What training is given focuses on implementation of centrally determined programmes rather than an innovative response to local opportunities and constraints. Although great advances have been made in the corporate world with respect to the theory and practice of management, few changes have been made in how school managers are selected and trained. **No matter what approach is taken to decentralization, *the success of the reform hinges in great measure on the provision of professional training in management to local school managers.***

2(c) Who can incorporate the client into the operational process?

This question is an issue only in systems governed by the logic of Professional Expertise and is worked out in the Bureaucratic Domain. In some education systems, local unit managers are expected to recruit the participation of parents and other community members; in other systems, law mandates this participation. Participation varies from financial support to involvement in decisions about operation of the organization and evaluation of organizational performance. In some countries, this involvement occurs only at the school level, while at others it is at the district level.

Decisions about involvement are important as they can change the balance of power with respect to decision-making on other issues.

3. Decisions about the personnel of the organization

3(a) Who determines the qualifications for education personnel?

Local levels can make these decisions, if the higher level of governance establishes some system of accountability with respect to performance. This may be an external assessment device, as in New Zealand, or market demand (as with charter schools in other countries). The importance of location of these decisions is linked to decisions about curriculum and instructional technology. If central authorities decide on a highly specific curriculum, including guidelines or mandates

for instructional practices, central agencies should maintain some sort of control or oversight (i.e. assessment of compliance) with respect to the personnel hired to implement the programmes.

This kind of centralization poses problems in countries with large regional variations in the supply of qualified teachers. Some countries, for example, find it difficult to recruit qualified teachers to small towns and rural areas. The official programme cannot be implemented because of lack of qualified personnel.

On the other hand, decisions about qualifications can only be made locally if local decision-makers construct their own curriculum, or become expert in choosing a curriculum. *The transfer of authority for decisions about personnel qualifications should, therefore, be made only when local decision-makers have acquired competence in the curriculum.*

There is ample evidence that these decisions can be made effectively by non-professional bodies. In that case they are activities within the Civic Domain. In other countries these decisions are reserved for Professionals, and are made within the Bureaucratic Domain.

3(b) Who actually hires and fires?

Many countries now permit hiring of teachers by local units of governance, in some cases, districts (as in the USA), in other cases schools (as in countries with charter schools. These units may be Professional or Political.

The major issue appears to be corruption of the process of selection. Teachers (sometimes) are hired (and fired) on the basis of criteria unrelated to their ability to implement the curriculum. Neither Professional Expertise or Political Legitimacy governance structures are immune from corruption. Proponents of Political Legitimacy decentralization argue that corruption can be controlled (although not totally eliminated) and that the benefits from political participation (citizens or their elected representatives) far outweigh costs.

Issues of corruption are a major concern for teachers and their unions, and should be acknowledged in any attempt to transfer authority for hiring to local levels. Procedures should be transparent, and mechanisms for accountability should be strong and effective.

3(c) Who can transfer teachers?

Teacher transfer is a time-consuming issue for many education systems, especially those that locate all authority in the central ministry. Teaching days are lost when teachers must travel to the capital to expedite the transfer process.

On the other hand, there are at least two reasons why authority for transfers should not be located solely in schools. First, no school would want to be forced to accept a teacher voluntarily or involuntarily transferred from another school. Second, individual schools are not likely to obtain adequate information about the supply of teachers seeking placements. Only those schools whose location or reputation attracted many applicants are able to choose teachers that fit their requirements. Isolated schools (rural, inner city) find themselves with no candidates to fill vacancies. **Transfers are handled best by the level immediately above schools.**

3(d) Who sets the pay scale?

Some decentralization reforms have shifted authority for pay scales to more local units, for example, to the state or province or to the municipality. The effect is to introduce variation across units in pay scales. This variation is of major concern to teacher organizations as it affects the livelihood of their members and acts against solidarity within the profession. In some countries, there is a surplus of persons seeking jobs as teachers who meet the formal requirements. Local control of wage rates creates a teacher labour market that over time will force wages down[3]. Over time lower wage rates reduce the quality

3. There is little evidence to support this belief of teacher organizations. The most severe attacks on teacher salaries have, in recent years, occurred in countries with highly centralized systems and national unions. In Latin America, for example, teacher salaries in constant value declined to 35 per cent of what they were 10 years earlier, when governments responded to IMF pressures by cutting social-sector spending.

of persons who enter the teaching profession, and therefore affect quality. Some countries have national pay scales for teachers, although local districts or schools carry out selection.

Pay scales can be a political issue and therefore resolved in the Political Domain. Professionals, on the other hand, seek to handle this issue within the Bureaucratic Domain.

3(e) Who determines pay increases and promotions?

Teacher organizations prefer that these decisions be made automatically, for example as a function of years of service, number of dependents, or obtaining a higher level academic qualification. They may prefer local administration of the pay mechanisms if it can be demonstrated that the local administration is more reliable than central administration.

Teacher organizations in general oppose performance pay schemes because they create distinctions between teachers and weaken organizational solidarity. Teachers are especially concerned about decentralization proposals that would permit local administration of performance pay, arguing that the administration of these schemes is subject to corruption.

In most countries these decisions have been made in the Political Domain. This reflects the tremendous interest generated among stakeholders. Some experts claim that they are able to specify those pay scales and rates that will maximize efficiency and product, but the evidence to support these claims is extremely limited.

4. Decisions about which clients to serve

It is useful to distinguish between those people and groups directly served by the education system, and those who benefit indirectly. The former are clients, the latter are stakeholders. In principle, the education system is supposed to serve all children. Many countries exclude, however, children with severe handicaps. All systems promise only a basic level of education for all (eligible) children; restrictions are placed on those who can participate at higher levels of education. For example, in no country are all persons admitted to university.

All countries specify some minimal level of education for every child, usually in some form of national document. States or autonomous local units may vary, however, in the regulations governing access to higher levels of education.

Decisions of this kind involve many stakeholders and should be made in the Political Domain. In most systems, however, dominated by Professional expertise, they are made in the Bureaucratic Domain.

4(a) Who specifies the proportion of potential clients to serve?

In some countries, this decision fortunately is now moot for primary education, as there are spaces for all children. In other countries, however, children are turned away once the maximum class size is achieved. Many countries cannot admit all children to secondary schools, and no country admits all applicants to higher education. Decisions about the number (or sometimes proportion of applicants) to admit are often conditioned by financial considerations. This would suggest that the decision is made at the same level as the major source of funding, usually a more central organization. If, however, the local organization has autonomy with respect to factors that affect the cost per student (for example, class size, salaries of teachers, use of alternative technologies for delivery of instruction), then decisions about how many clients to admit can be made by local units. Private, subsidized schools, for example, receive central government funds, but have autonomy with respect to staffing and can, therefore, admit more students than would be admitted to a public school.

4(b) Who specifies criteria and procedures for admission?

Entrance to each level and type of education is determined by some criteria. Even primary schools impose a minimum age requirement. The most common criteria are examination scores, but their use is often contested, especially by stakeholders who feel the examinations are biased against their group. For example, a minority language group might claim that use of the dominant language discriminates against its children. Decentralization of these decisions permits local units to vary criteria for admission. For example, a local unit may decide to admit based on quotas (to ensure a more equitable distribution by gender, ethnic group, and location of residence).

4(c) Who determines what clients should receive?

This set of decisions is about the pairing of students with the curriculum. In a highly centralized system, the assignment is automatic - all students admitted to a particular programme (for example, the science programme in secondary school) take the same set of courses, which follow the curriculum. In many countries, however, the admission decision is followed by another, which assigns the student to a particular level or track within the programme (within a given school).

4(d) Who specifies the cost paid by the client?

Many countries now charge fees of one kind or another even in 'free' public schools. Many countries require students to purchase their own textbooks, materials, and uniforms. In some countries, parents are assessed a 'voluntary' fee that is used to defray both school and ministry expenses. For the most part these sources of revenue make little contribution to overall school finance, although they may represent a serious burden for individual families. Decisions about this kind of revenue source are included here because they are linked to clients (and often are made at a more local level).

5. Decisions about categories and amounts of resources

Much of recent debate about decentralization focuses on issues of funding of education. This debate takes place in the Political Domain. Ministries of education have been notably silent. Issues of finance have been ignored for years, many have no internal competence to decide what resources are required and how to allocate them, much less where else they might be obtained.

There are two perspectives on why discussions of resources are so prominent today. One points out that as a result of debt and consequent IMF intervention, many countries have reduced public-sector spending. Most countries have decided to cut spending on education by the national government. This has prompted a search for other sources of funds, often encouraged by the central government. In effect this has been a push for decentralization from

above. Most of the proposals have been within the Professional Expertise position.

A second perspective argues that the main impetus for a search for new funds comes about because of the perceived decline of the adequacy of public education. Faced with a non-responsive ministry of education, local public and private groups have sought new resources in order to establish their own systems. This constitutes pressure for decentralization from below.

The source of these latter proposals varies according to which stakeholder groups are dominant. In countries and regions where private-sector corporations are politically active, there have been proposals for a Market approach to education decentralization. Reforms based on the Political Legitimacy position have occurred primarily where teacher unions, and grass-root political organizations are active.

5(a) Who decides about sources of funds?

This category includes decisions about who can decide on who pays, and how much they pay. In most countries, public education is financed from general revenues collected by the central government. As *Figure 3* suggested, some countries use revenues generated at both central and more local levels of government. Governments use a variety of taxing powers, for example, customs duties, income taxes, gasoline taxes, alcohol and cigarette taxes and so on. In recent years, consideration has been given to imposition of 'user fees', that is, direct charges to the client of the public education organization. Some countries have attempted to raise significant portions of necessary revenue at the secondary level from user fees.

5(b) Who decides how much revenue?

In many countries, political bodies (for example, the legislature) make decisions about sources of funds, but decisions about the amount of revenue for the education organization are made by a non-elected government agency. This may be a ministry of finance in a centralized system or a municipal finance committee in a decentralized system.

5(c) Who decides the allocation or budgeting of revenue?

This set of decisions includes the authority to transfer funds from one kind of organization to another. For example, in Chile, municipal governments can allocate some of the resources they receive to private schools. In some countries, organizations with budget authority can allocate resources as they like, for example, on alternative technologies or even non-educational activities. In other cases, the more central organization specifies the categories within which funds must be allocated.

5(d) Who decides about actual spending?

In most, but not all, cases, managers make decisions about spending within categories specified in a budget approved at the same or next highest level. Their authority may include, however, some freedom to change the relative amounts spent across categories. For example, a more central organization may specify that the unit manager has 10 per cent 'fungibility', that is, that expenditure totals can vary as much as 10 per cent from the budget total.

IV. Readiness for decentralization: the conditions to be met

Two kinds of conditions must be met for implementation of any reform, including decentralization: there must be political support for the proposed changes; and those involved in the reform must be capable of carrying it out. Most decentralization reforms have failed to reach the objectives set for them, because they did not meet adequately one or both of the two conditions. Many reforms fail because enthusiasm for the changes is shared by too limited a number of actors or stakeholders. As noted earlier, many reforms are blocked successfully by teachers who have not been persuaded of the benefits of decentralization. Other reforms fail because those who receive authority for decision-making are not able to exercise it properly. Reforms that involve local communities, for example, fail if community members lack experience and skills in collective decision-making and organizational management.

This chapter introduces some terms that are helpful in carrying out an analysis of whether the system is 'ready' for change. The first section analyzes the various actors that are or can be involved in decision-making for education. The second section specifies some of the more important capacities these actors must have.

Stakeholder involvement in proposals for decentralization

Stakeholders are persons or groups with a common interest in a particular action, and its consequences, and who are affected by it (Welsh and McGinn, 1998). All actors in an institutional context are *potential* or *passive* stakeholders. In education, this reservoir holds groups as diverse as:

- parents' associations;
- universities and teacher-training institutions;
- taxpayers' associations;
- teachers' unions;
- public contractors;
- employers' organizations;
- publishing firms;
- professional organizations;
- political parties, and others.

All these groups have an interest in where decisions are made with respect to the educational agenda and the organizations that participate in the process of educational provision. All are potential stakeholders.

In the process of discussing a proposal for decentralization, some actors are transformed from potential stakeholders to *kinetic* or *active* stakeholders. The kinetic stakeholders generally pursue their interests within the situation (context) of a particular organization within the institution. In this context, stakeholders focus upon particular issues that touch directly upon their interests. It is here that toes are stepped upon and dancing partners found, as stakeholders forge coalitions. The process can have transformational effects as coalitions see interests and possible effects not recognized earlier. The transformations in turn lead to shifts in the organizational context.

Active involvement of stakeholders in organizational planning and decision-making increases the likelihood of successful action.

Decision-making can be improved by increasing information both about the range of concerns, objectives and commitments of intended beneficiaries of programmes, and about alternative means to meet those objectives and concerns while sustaining the commitment. For example, involvement of parents in the design of a new curriculum unit may alert planners to sensitive topics that should be avoided. Teachers may be able to suggest alternative ways to organize the unit.

Involvement of groups interested in the process and outcome of programmes increases the understanding of those groups about the

objectives and constraints, heightens the legitimacy of whatever policies are finally chosen, and contributes to mobilizing support for policy implementation.

Decentralization is a primary method for involvement of stakeholders, but not all stakeholders participate with the same intensity at all moments. For example, a proposal to localize control of primary schools attracts the attention of a different set of stakeholders than does a proposal to give autonomy to upper-secondary schools that prepare for the university. Perhaps all children go to primary school; a much smaller proportion from families with higher levels of income prepares for entrance into the university. Teacher unions are much less concerned about decisions that affect the location of decisions about textbooks, than about those that affect salaries and transfers. Central governments in countries with ethnically homogeneous populations feel less threatened by proposals for local control of schools than do governments in countries with diverse, heterogeneous populations. On the other hand, calls for decentralization are more common in countries in which ethnic, linguistic or religious groups have developed strong identities.

How different groups of stakeholders react to decentralization

The interests of stakeholders with respect to location of decision-making take three different forms and identify three categories.

1. Producers

One category of stakeholders is concerned with decisions about the conception and design of the education process, training of the personnel that will be involved, and production of the facilities and materials that will be used. The focus is the construction or production of the capacity to educate. These stakeholders are known as *Producers*. This group of stakeholders includes:

- construction companies;
- companies that produce instructional materials including textbooks;
- vendors of uniforms, food, and other consumables;
- insurance companies;

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- curriculum and textbook writers;
- teacher-training institutions including universities;
- universities and consulting firms that provide technical assistance services;
- companies that produce and apply tests; and
- domestic and international agencies that thrive on the health or illness of the educational establishment.

The primary concern of these stakeholders is the provision or production of the inputs to the education process. Because of economies of scale, most of these Producers are national organizations, even in countries with a high degree of decentralization. In the USA, in which school districts can use whatever textbook they want, most districts buy complete sets covering all grades from one of five national publishers.

2. Distributors

A second set of interests focuses on the location of decisions about the *distribution* of the 'product' that is available. These decisions are about access to education, and the instructional process (including assessment of learning as part of instruction). Decisions on where to locate schools involve different stakeholders than the decision of whether schools will be built at all. Decisions are made about who will be admitted, and who will be kept. The instructional process per se requires decisions made principally by teachers with varying degrees of indirect control by administrators, supervisors and others. The second broad category of stakeholders is *Distributors*. They include parent groups, representatives of teachers (i.e. unions), managers of schools, and governing groups limited to decisions about application of official curricula[4].

4. The distinction between production and distribution of education is useful in countries in which 'private' schools have complete autonomy with respect to decisions about instruction, but are constrained to follow publicly produced curricula.

3. Users

A third set of stakeholders is concerned with the use to which the results of education can be put. Education transforms individuals, giving them new knowledge, skills and values. These transformations can benefit both the individuals transformed and those who benefit from improved knowledge, skills and values. Students and their parents can use knowledge and certification to enhance the student's life chances (as well as improving the quality of his or her life). Employers hope that educated employees will be more productive, that is, increase profits. Churches rely on education to support ethical and moral systems. Professional societies benefit from the expansion of their membership and knowledge base.

This group of stakeholders is called *Users* because their primary concern is the use-value of education. These stakeholders have most to say about the content of education, and about its finance. Their concerns are prompted by how education relates to their objectives and not primarily to technical aspects of education itself. Producers using criteria such as quality of production and ease of language, for example, would make a selection of textbooks, while Users might be more likely to apply criteria related to specific content. Employers might be less concerned about hours spent on a particular subject and more about whether graduates had proper work habits.

Any given person or group may occupy more than one of these stakeholder categories. For example, a person may be both a parent of a student (a User) and work in the ministry of education (a Producer and a Distributor). The owner of a construction firm is a Producer, and may also be a User concerned with the quality of graduates that s/he can hire. The arousal of these interests will occur in different moments of time, according to the process or cycle of decision-making.

Stakeholder involvement in decentralization varies according to tasks

The overall interest of any stakeholder can be categorized in terms of the *tasks* of the *organization* that are affected by the policy in question. Education organizations are designed to carry out four major

categories of tasks. These tasks can be characterized as referring to Access, Retention, Classification, and Placement. Education organizations:

- recruit, select and admit students;
- attempt to keep them in the system long enough to have some transforming effect;
- sort them into different tracks and levels; and
- certify them for and place them in (institutions of) the larger society.

The broad interests of stakeholders take a specific form according to the kind of task that is under discussion. Each of these tasks is affected by proposals for decentralization.

Some stakeholders call for decentralization with the objective of increasing access to education. Producers benefit directly from expansion of education and therefore are likely to support these kinds of proposals. These stakeholders can be mobilized to support expansion of educational access. Producers will also have some interest in decentralization policies that impact on the retention of students in the system, as improved retention in the short run has the effect of increasing the number of students in the system.

Those involved in distribution are more interested in policies that affect the activities associated with policies of Retention and Classification within the system. Teachers, for example, are primarily concerned with issues that affect the way they 'distribute' education, that is, work with students. These concerns are often defined in terms of quality, but primarily affect the work that teachers are expected to do. Most teacher unions are organized primarily to provide what are considered suitable working conditions and compensation for teachers and to protect their jobs. The managers of education systems also may be concerned with quality, but again focus their attention on the way the work of education is carried out, that is, on the process of distribution.

Some groups that appear to be interested in distribution issues, for example, those who call for increased efficiency in education, in

fact are concerned primarily about the production process. Although a nod is given to improving quality, almost always the policies they back involve doing the same with less rather than more with the same. Teachers, on the other hand, can be mobilized to do more with the same, as has been demonstrated in the ability of school-based management policies to increase teacher work and student learning with no increase in teacher pay. In effect, what is happening here is that teachers are allowed to have a major say in the production of education, and not just in its distribution.

Although parents are Users of education, the benefits of decentralization are not uniform. In a poor country that has not yet achieved universal education, an association representing low-income parents will define access to schooling of any kind as the major objective. It is likely to oppose decentralization proposals that do not increase spending on school construction and hiring of teachers. An association representing middle- and upper-income parents, on the other hand, might favour a decentralization policy that increases access to higher-quality schooling without increasing the overall supply of schools.

Employers also are not a monolithic group, nor is their position with respect to the value of education constant over time. Low-technology employers tend to favour policies that produce many graduates with basic skills. When unemployment is high, employers in general are likely to seek to reduce spending on education. They might favour a decentralization policy that relieves the central state (and therefore themselves as a source of tax revenues) of the cost burden. High-technology employers tend to favour decentralization schemes that promise to improve knowledge and skill levels, even if that does mean not increasing the number of graduates. At the same time, they are likely to favour central involvement in assessment and the imposition of standards.

Efficiency is primarily a concern of groups that want to contain or reduce spending on education or on the level of education in question. User groups that promote decentralization reforms in the name of improved efficiency may be seeking to shift resources from one level of education to another, or from education to some other sector.

Required capacities for effective decentralization

The capacities and capabilities required for effective decentralization can be understood by consideration of *Figure 2*. The structure in the Figure is based on four polarities: the Constitution or Organic law; Rules, Staff, and Civic capacities. These are identified in the shaded boxes. The interactions between the polarities interact to set up a 'force field' within which governance and decentralization can take place. The interactions are represented by the numbered boxes, and are:

1. The Legal Domain – Interaction between Constitution and Rules.
2. The Bureaucratic Domain – Interaction between Rules and Staff.
3. The Civic Domain – Interaction between Staff and Civic.
4. The Political Domain – Interaction between Civic and Constitution.

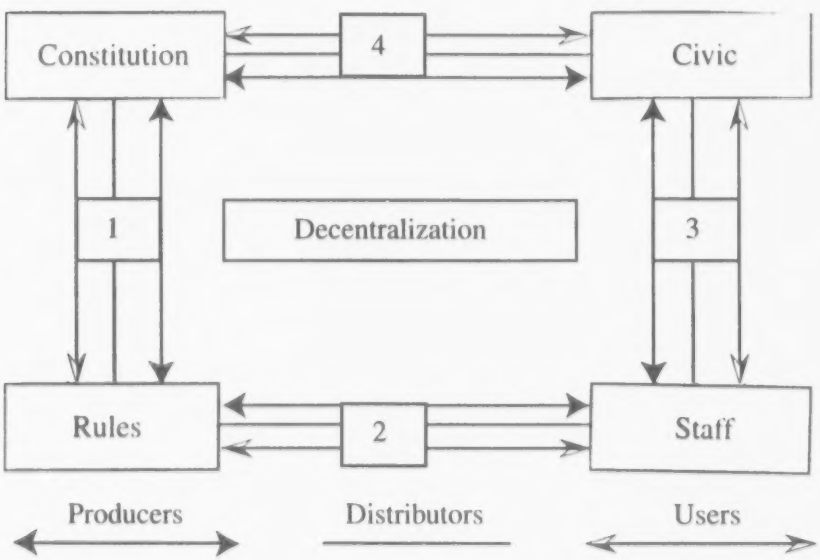
Imagine four magnets with iron filings scattered equidistant from each. When the power of a particular magnet is varied, or a magnet is removed, the pattern of the iron filings will also change. Similarly, the deficiency or absence of any of the polarities results in variations in the structures and practices of governance and reduces the probability of achieving successful and sustainable decentralization or the implementation of any other policy.

This configuration of the polarities in *Figure 2* is neither hierarchically nor sequentially conditioned. Action may be initiated in any polarity at any time but the initiators must be aware of the consequences for the other polarities. For example, introducing a new salary rank will have implications for Rules, Staff and flow over into the Civic in the way of taxation.

The analysis of the polarities shown in *Figure 2* helps gauge the readiness of the education system for the relocation of decision-making, and provides the base for planning and implementation. Each time this analytical format is used it should be adapted to address the local situation. The process of analysis will serve first and foremost as a learning process for the participants that will generate anticipated and unintended consequences. The recommendations and action proposals

resulting from the analysis will also enter into the dialogue of change. This represents a very ambitious and challenging agenda with the goal of sustainable reallocation of decision-making in the education system.

Figure 2. The Decentralization context - Interactive Domains



Stakeholders and interactions

The stakeholders referred to earlier actively link the polarities – Producers, Distributors and Users of the product of education. The stakeholders will have different perspectives on how the polarities should relate and be managed. And each of the stakeholders will seek to maximize their benefits while limiting restrictions placed upon them. The teachers (Distributors) will want laws that defend and extend their interests. These will be opposed or supported by the Producers (governments, builders, and publishers) in defence of their interests. Finally, the Users (employers, universities) will want laws and regulations that protect and advance their interests in the control of

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the quality and content of the education process. The stakeholders are the generators of this system, the pursuit of their interests and intentions activates the system. The stakeholders respond to the emergent opportunities and challenges that their prior decisions and alliances had set in motion. The outcome of these ongoing and recurrent interactions is a system that is in a persistent state of disequilibrium and learning. These are the preconditions for the system to be able to notice, learn, adapt and achieve high levels of decentralization.

Analysis of polarities

The Constitutional or Organic Law polarity

These are the constitutional provisions, capacities and capabilities that underpin the rights and authorities that support and sustain decentralization. To address the constitutional polarity the following steps are suggested:

1. Collect the following material:
   - copy of National Constitution;
   - commentaries on the Constitution;
   - commentaries on the constitutional reform process (if applicable);
   - collection of constitutional decisions referring to education.

2. Using the material produce: statement of the constitutional provisions in respect of decentralization available for analysis.

3. Carry out the following analysis: analyze the provisions for their impact on Governance and Education:
   - decentralization – definitions;
   - central government – power, authorities and accountability;
   - local government – power, authorities and accountability;
   - application to functional areas – education, health;
   - ministries – institutional and organizational authorities and powers;

- civic associations – institutional and organizational authorities and powers;
- freedom of association;
- access to information;
- human rights.

4. Using the material produce: statement of constitutionally authorized institutional and organizational capabilities and capacities by level of governance and civic associations and implementation options.

List domains where constitutional implementation is pending and its implications for implementation.

> *Interactive Domain* [1]
>
> The *Legal Domain* is the interaction between the Constitutional and Rules as worked out by the stakeholders. Decentralization policies and programmes will reflect an ongoing engagement between the Parliament, the Bureaucracy and the Courts. The pace of decentralization will also be dictated by the distribution of power within this domain. There is little evidence to support an assumption that the existence of Constitutional provisions will ensure the timely passing of the necessary parliamentary legislation and the formulation of institutional rules and regulations. Likewise Parliamentarians and Bureaucrats do not have the same perceptions and urgency on matters such as decentralization.

5. Outcome: the constitutional guidelines authorizing and supporting the decentralization of the governance of education.

Rules or institutional polarity

Parliament authorizes the laws, regulations, rules, procedures and practices that direct the work of those charged with implementation of the constitutional and legislative provisions. Where the authorizations

fail to define the content and location of authority; where they are contradictory or mutually exclusive; then the capacity and capability to implement decentralization is compromised.

These 'rules' must be drafted and supported by institutional authorities that ensure the facility and readiness to apply them. This is of critical importance in thwarting the spread of corrupt practices. Corruption here refers to any and all practices that divert the organization at any and all levels away from its mission and towards the agenda and benefit of persons and other organizations.

1. Collect this material:

   - enactments made by, or under the authority of, the parliament as established by the Constitution;
   - any orders, rules and regulations, made by any person or authority under a power conferred by this Constitution and parliamentary legislation;
   - the existing law;
   - the common law;
   - the customary law.

2. Using the material produce: the comprehensive collection of all 'rules' related to governance and provision of education.

3. Carry out the following analysis: how the 'rules' related to governance and provision of education impact on decentralization – enabling, inhibiting or neutral.

   - identify and demonstrate the direct linkage of the 'rules' to the supporting constitutional provisions;
   - identify and analyze the 'rules' for their capacity and capability to support and sustain decentralization of the governance of the education system;
   - identify any 'deficiencies' in respect of the 'rules' and recommend 'remedial steps'.

4. Using the material produce:

   - a report of the capabilities and capacities, powers and authorities, established and supported by the code of 'rules' by level of governance;
   - a report of the deficiencies in respect of the capabilities and capacities, powers and authorities, of the code of 'rules' to establish and support the decentralization of the governance of education.

Interactive Domain [2]

The *Bureaucratic Domain* links the institutional and organizational, the rules and the people who apply them. It is in this domain that the nature and pace of decentralization is decided due to the following:

- First, changes of hierarchical relationships and locations of power reflected in functions defined by laws and regulations must be negotiated among political parties, parliamentarians, civil service commissioners, particular ministries, trade unions and professional associations. For example, a new civil service structure will be needed and arriving at that structure will challenge a wide array of vested interests. The complexity of the negotiated changes poses the greatest 'political' challenge to decentralization.
- Second, the relationships within ministries as power is transferred from one level to another, from one division to another and from one unit to another will reflect all the complexity outlined above.

5. Outcome: A programme to formulate the institutional capacities and capabilities of the ministry of education and ancillary organizations to implement the constitutional decentralization provisions.

Staff polarity

This polarity addresses the 'Staff' capabilities and capacities: knowledge, skills, aptitudes and experiences; relevant to the implementation of the decentralization programme (Sack and Saidi, 1997). The 'depths' and 'density' of the organizational capabilities and capacities will decide how far decentralization can be extended from the centre. As with the 'Rules', the 'Staff' capacities and capabilities must be put in place and supported by institutional powers and authorities that ensure their application. This provision is critical if corruption is to be openly addressed and limited.

1. Capacities and capabilities required:

The formal and professional structures and functions needed to support an effective and efficient ministry of education are well documented in Sack and Saidi (1997). Attention is drawn to some of the additional capacities and capabilities that are essential for the working of decentralization:

- a public service commitment to management and performance in place of administration and control and the pursuit of a diversity of response and action rather than insisting on homogeneity and conformity;
- an active public service tolerance of the right of others to express their views on the provision and performance of decentralization and the 'professional' organization, together with an active encouragement of the citizen and citizen's associations in the governance and provision of education;
- an active public service acceptance of public accountability systems, demonstrated by the creation of transparent reporting systems with implementing structures and training of the professionals and citizens in the use of these systems.

2. Collect this material:

- laws governing civil service structure;
- the local government laws governing conditions of service of public servants;

- the 'rules' – structure, job descriptions of the ministry of education;
- manpower inventory – assessment of the ministry;
- needs assessment of the knowledge, skills, aptitudes and experience to support decentralization (Sack and Saidi, 1997).

3. Using the material produce: a detailed description of the current human resource capabilities and capacities of the ministry

- management;
- development;
- monitoring and evaluation.

4. Carry out the following analysis: the human resource capacities and capabilities to support decentralization.
- needs assessment of the knowledge, skills, aptitudes and experience to implement decentralization at each level of governance;
- an assessment of the structural capacities and capabilities of the ministry to implement decentralization at each level of governance.

5. Using the material, produce: a plan to upgrade the staff at various levels, including both long-term and short-term training.

Interactive Domain [3]

The *Civic Domain* links the bureaucratic-organizational to civic action. This deals with the endeavour to ensure that the bureaucracy shares power with the active citizens and their associations. This in turn demands the empowerment of the staff and the citizens. This is first and foremost an attitude shift for both parties. Thus, the creation of the capabilities and capacities must also address the values and valuing questions. Each must be brought to an appreciation and awareness of participation in the implementation and sustaining of decentralization programmes. This can be construed as a possible challenge to the existing political powers and structures and so resistance coupled with sabotage can be anticipated.

6. Expected outcome: a human resource development and investment programme to support the implementation of decentralization among the professional staff and the civic associations.

Civic polarity

Citizen capacity: this polarity addresses the civic capabilities and capacities plus the enabling civic associations and their role in decentralization. Civic capacity is demonstrated by the degree to which the citizens participate in governance from local to national levels, their electoral participation, and the density-number, integration and co-operation of their non-government sponsored civic associations.

1. Capacities and capabilities required:

The citizens and their associations must command the knowledge, skills, experiences, aptitudes and structures needed to get the work done. For the citizen to effectively organize for participation, the following must be in place:

- basic literacy and numeracy;
- basic organizational and management skills within the community;
- communication skills supported by access to basic communication infrastructure – roads, telephones, radio, and television;
- an active tolerance of the right of others to participate independent of their class, belief, and gender and to express their views on the provision of education, reflected in the acceptance of diversity of response and action rather than insisting on homogeneity and conformity;
- an active tolerance of the right of others to participate independent of their class, belief, and gender and to express their views on the performance of the civic organization;
- an active acceptance of public accountability applied to civic associations, demonstrated by the creation of transparent reporting systems with implementing structures, and training citizens in the use of these systems.

2. Collect this material:

- inventory of statutory civic associations and bodies authorized to implement the provision of education at each level of governance;
- inventory of voluntary civic associations and bodies active in the provision of education at each level of governance;
- inventory of professional associations and bodies authorized and active in the provision of education at each level of governance;
- inventory of the statutory and voluntary bodies involved in the education and training of citizens to execute their rights and duties as active citizens.

3. Using the material produce: a descriptive profile of the civic capacities and capabilities to support and sustain decentralization.

4. Carry out the following analysis: a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the civic capacity and capability by level of governance, by region, district and locality.

5. Using the material produce:

- A short-, medium- and long-term Civic Investment plan to enable the citizens and their associations to exercise their rights and duties in the implementation of decentralization.

Interactive Domain [4]

The *Political Domain* links the civic capacity and the constitutional provisions. Where there is constitutional provision and supportive civic structures that sustain an open political process linked to a rich fabric of communicating civic associations, then decentralization is a possible option. Where the citizen is not empowered as outlined above, where the civic associations are few and isolated, where there is dictatorship and economic oligarchies, the political domain is unable to support and sustain decentralization.

6. Outcome:

The active citizen in the community with the knowledge, skills, experiences, values and aptitudes to support and enable her and him to play a full role in decentralization.

The knowledge, skills, aptitudes and experiences of the citizens will enable them to sustain and enhance the civic associations in support of the decentralized governance of education. The more complex and integrated the network of civic associations, the more sustainable will be any attempt at decentralization.

V. Recommendations

The authors' position with respect to decentralization reforms combines a universal principle with a keen awareness of enormous differences in culture, resources, and capacities in the contexts in which schools are operated. This combination, along with empirical knowledge of what has happened as a result of decentralization in many countries, leads them to suggest some strategic positions with respect to decentralization that will be of direct use to policy-makers and educational planners.

The guiding principle of subsidiarity

The universal principle is derived from a growing body of research on the performance of organizations [March, 1999], which shows that the most effective governance of any organization occurs when authority for decision-making is located *as close as possible* to the site where actions are taken. The logic of the Principle derives from the centrality of resources in human endeavour. The challenge facing all societies is the mobilization and utilization of resources sufficient to respond to the ambitions of their peoples. Resources are scarce and must be applied efficiently. Resources must constantly be renewed, as old structures decay. In addition, new ambitions appear, requiring additional resources. The physical supply of resources is finite, but human societies have learned to constantly expand their capacities through more and more complex forms of organization, and by greater utilization of the capacities of their members.

The *as close as possible* caveat conveys the authors' understanding of how variations in culture, resources and capacities mediate the exercise of authority. If a local group is not willing, not prepared and lacks resources, decentralization will fail to achieve the objectives held for it. Stated more simply, most education systems will benefit from moving decision-making away from the centre, and downward in the hierarchy, but only if conditions are right. It is also the case that

some forms of decentralization are better for some objectives than for others.

Overall, given the proper conditions, a Political Legitimacy approach to decentralization is preferred, because it is fundamentally *inclusionary*, while Professional Expertise and Market Efficiency approaches are *exclusionary*, limiting governance to a few. Democratic organizations are best suited to make full use of the capacities of their members, to maintain high levels of motivation, and to sustain more complex organizational forms.

There are situations, however, where the Professional Expertise approach to decentralization is most appropriate. **Expert decentralization is probably the best strategy to pursue if the objective is to minimize variations in quality and to maximize overall school effectiveness simultaneously.** Most schools will continue to operate within the broad guidelines established by the centre if dominated by principals who share common values and understandings about education. Over time, local control of schools by teachers will generate variations in the kind and quality of education offered.

If the objective is to maximize community participation in decision-making, political decentralization is the best strategy to pursue. This participation will probably not produce greater variety in the kinds of education offered and will increase variations in quality. On the other hand, democratic institutions and capacity will be strengthened[5].

The Market strategy is best if the objective is to develop centres of excellence. Like political decentralization, this strategy will temporarily defuse criticisms of government, and reduce the central government's share of the cost burden of education.

Which approach should be implemented depends on the contextual situation. The decision about what approach is therefore strategic, based on the Principle of Subsidiarity.

5. This is true even though, as Maclure (1993) has noted, most communities are not homogeneous and may not have a shared perspective on the education they desire.

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